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The Schwenckfelders and the Moravians Two Hundred Years Ago

(1723-1742)

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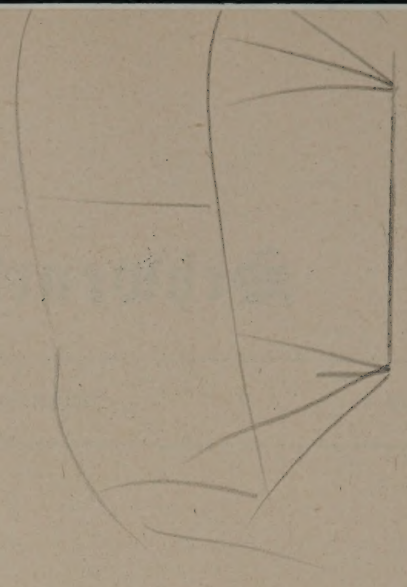
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	3
THE MORAVIANS	5
THE SCHWENCKFELDERS AND THE MORAVIANS IN SAXONY (1723-1734)	7
THE SCHWENCKFELDERS AND THE MORAVIANS IN PENNSYLVANIA (1734-1742)	12
NICHOLAUS LUDWIG, COUNT VON ZINZENDORF (1700-1760)	30
AUGUSTUS GOTTLIEB SPANGENBERG (1704-1792)	44



PREFACE

This issue of SCHWENCKFELDIANA has been devoted to the relations existing between the Schwenckfelders and the Moravians two hundred years ago. The theme is a development of a paper entitled "The Schwenckfelders and the Count von Zinzendorf Two Hundred Years Ago," and presented at the Memorial Day Services at the Palm Schwenckfelder Church, September 24, 1942. Some were surprised to learn of the gravity of the situation, while others had never before heard that the Schwenckfelders had been so dangerously near the verge of going to Georgia instead of going to Pennsylvania. Such momentous decisions and crises are always interesting, for by investigating the chain of causes and effects by which we have been helped to become what we are, they also afford us an opportunity to speculate on what we probably would have been had decisions been different. If the Schwenckfelders had gone to Georgia they might very easily have perished in a few years as did many of the Moravians and their name and identity been obliterated.

The history of the relations between the Schwenckfelders and the Moravians as set forth in this issue were never heretofore written up and presented in their entirety. The facts have been gleaned from manuscripts and printed sources in the Schwenckfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. Acknowledgment is also due to the Friends' Library, Germantown, Philadelphia; the Moravian Library, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; and the Libraries of the Pennsylvania Historical Society and of the University of Pennsylvania for valuable information and assistance.

ELMER S. GERHARD,
SELINA GERHARD SCHULTZ,
Editors.

Germantown, Philadelphia
414 Church Lane
September, 1944

THE MORAVIANS

When, in the winter and spring of 1726, the Schwenckfelders fled from Silesia into Saxony to escape their persecutors, they found there a people who a few years earlier had fled from Bohemia for similar reasons. They were the Moravians, so-called. These two religious groups were destined to live in close proximity for a number of years, the former in Berthelsdorf, the latter in Herrnhut, Saxony, as refugees welcomed and protected temporarily by Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf.

"The Moravian Church, or *Unitas Fratrum*," to quote a writer of Moravian history, "belongs to the historic churches of Christendom. For more than four and one-half centuries it has never wavered in its claim to be a part of the Catholic Church, possessing the historic episcopate and the three orders of the ministry, administering of the sacraments and preaching of the Word according to apostolic precept, laying special emphasis on the importance of Christian unity, the cultivation of personal religion and the necessity of personal service.

"It dates from the year 1457; Bohemia was the land of its birth; and the more spiritually-minded followers of John Hus were its first members. Hus, the gifted rector of the University of Prague, an earnest reformer and eloquent preacher, owed much of his religious enlightenment to the writings of Wyclif, introduced into Bohemia by the wife of Richard II, a princess of that country. After Hus' martyrdom at Constance in 1415, the greater part of his followers took up the sword in defense of their religious liberties. Some were pacified by concessions, others whose convictions went deeper withdrew and formed themselves into a religious community on New Testament lines under duly elected elders.

"Despite fierce persecutions the membership increased, the congregations multiplied, and the churches' influence spread far and wide, not only in Bohemia, but beyond its borders also. The name adopted was '*Unitas Fratrum*'; 'Ec-

clesia Fratrum,' 'the church of the Brotherhood' would be a more correct rendering of the original Bohemian name.

"By the year 1500, they had over 200 congregations with more than 100,000 members; and in 1535 these numbers had doubled themselves. As the church expanded it came to include three separate branches in Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland. Its history during the greater part of the 16th and 17th centuries is one long record of persecution. More than 30,000 families fled from Bohemia, including their sole surviving bishop, John Amos Comenius, the leading educationist in Europe at that time.

"With the death of Comenius in 1672, the first part of the history of the '*Unitas Fratrum*' ends. The second part opens at Herrnhut in Saxony in 1722, where a company of fugitives from the Bohemian border found a refuge on the estate of a young nobleman, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. They were soon joined by others from Bohemia, and in association with a number of German Pietists, formed themselves into a society similar to those which then existed in the Lutheran church. But this did not satisfy the descendants of the "*Unitas*"; they insisted they were not Lutherans; they belonged to a much older church, and being now in possession of a certain amount of religious liberty, they insisted upon its re-establishment. To this Zinzendorf was at first opposed till from a chance copy of the writings of Comenius, he learned what the history of the *Unitas* had been, how glorious its past, how evangelical its doctrine, how strict its discipline, how firm its faith and steadfastness under suffering. Almost unconsciously, Zinzendorf found himself being led on to devote his life, his means and his talents to the reorganization of this venerable Church.

"The little community at Herrnhut rapidly increased and developed in spite of the banishment of Zinzendorf by order of the Saxon government, on the ground of his having introduced unauthorized religious novelties, and of teaching false doctrine.

"At the beginning of the eighteenth century foreign missions were almost unknown among the Protestant churches; it was left to the Moravians to inaugurate the modern missionary movement. This dates from 1732 when two of the Moravian Brethren set out to evangelize the Negroes on the Island of St. Thomas. Others went to the Eskimos in Greenland, others to South America, to the North American Indians, to Persia and Ceylon, Egypt, Algiers, etc. Settlements sprang up in Denmark and Holland. Peter Bohler visited England in 1738 and became the means of the spiritual enlightenment of John Wesley.

"In America the Church took root in the middle of the eighteenth century at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and at Salem, North Carolina. One of the characteristic features of the Moravian Church is its educational system, and its zeal for the education of the young. Numerous boarding schools were opened in Germany, Holland, England, Switzerland, and America. The standard was high, and the discipline, though strict, was blended with the kindly influence of a distinctly Christian atmosphere."¹

¹ E. R. Hasse, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

THE SCHWENCKFELDERS AND THE MORAVIANS IN SAXONY, 1723-1734

The Schwenckfelders had thought of going to Pennsylvania before they went to Saxony; they would have done so if they could have sold their properties in Silesia and in that way gotten money together for the journey. But the Catholics seized the properties which the Schwenckfelders were compelled to leave behind. It was also only natural that some of them should be hesitant and timorous because of the tedious and perilous ocean voyage, and the wildness and strangeness of the country towards which they seemed to be drifting and toward which they seemed to be destined. Adam Wiegner, the father of Christopher Wiegner, advised strongly against migrating to America because of the great hazard of the journey and the danger which might be incurred from the Indians.

So they tried to find a suitable and safe retreat somewhere in the empire, or in Prussia, or Holland, before they resorted to Saxony. But nowhere did they find conditions satisfactory. Economic advantages were offered them, but they mistrusted them; economic these offers were and that was about all they were. This part of such a project interested them the least. After years of persecution they were anxious to find a place where they might enjoy freedom and the privilege of being let alone.

When conditions in Silesia under the Jesuit persecution became unbearable, the Schwenckfelders sent a deputation to Vienna, May, 1721, to make a plea for tolerance. This deputation consisted of three men: Balthasar Hoffman, and his father Christopher Hoffman, and Balthasar Hoffrichter. The latter soon returned but the other two remained five years at the Court of Vienna; they handed in the last petition for mercy and tolerance July 28, 1725. Two days later, July 30, 1725, a decree was issued from Vienna, stating among other matters that "the Schwenckfelder congregation in their submissive request to be tolerated in their confession of faith in the future, are once and for all refused; they shall never hereafter venture to present any new supplications." The Bishopric

of Breslau demanded that this band of heretics, *i.e.*, the deputation, be removed from the Court. So Balthasar Hoffman and his father fled for fear of treachery. Money was offered for taking Balthasar Hoffman prisoner even after he had fled from Vienna.¹

This decree meant new terror to the persecuted. The highways were patrolled so that none of these distressed people might escape. To turn Catholic was not to be thought of; to turn Lutheran was no longer allowable; to sell property was impossible; and all the highways were blocked. But escape they must—but how and whither? Inquiries were made of the Mennonites in Holland whether any abiding place and means of support might not be found in that country. But as answers from Holland were delayed in the same proportion as the oppression and persecution became more severe, the Schwenckfelders applied to Count von Zinzendorf for a place on his manor in Berthelsdorf, for the winter at least. The Count consented quite readily, writing to the Schwenckfelders on December 24, 1725, asserting his willingness to find a place for them in case of flight; and flee they did, a few months later, some to Goerlitz, but most of them to Berthelsdorf. Here they lived unmolested for eight years, 1726-1734. Many might have settled permanently, but for subsequent events.

The pressure upon the Saxon government at Dresden for the return of the Schwenckfelders to Silesia was apparently already well under way by February 28, 1732, on which day Count Caspar von Gersdorf advised Zinzendorf by letter not to withdraw any more people out of the Imperial Austrian domains, adding that it was doubtful whether the Schwenckfelders would maintain themselves.

On July 17th of the same year, Zinzendorf was requested by letter to give information concerning the Schwenckfelders, where they lived and what they

¹ Vide "A Vindication of Caspar Schwenckfeld, etc.," p. 70.

were doing, their number and behavior. The King of Poland and the Elector of Saxony had asked for this information.

The following answer, to the above request, by Count Zinzendorf, throws much light on his opinion of them and on his efforts in their behalf:

Zinzendorf's Letter to Count Caspar von Gersdorff—An Account of the Schwenckfelders and of His Efforts in Their Behalf, August, 1732

Under date of the 17th and the 26th instant (July), Your Honor was pleased to send me an order of April 29th from Highest Authority, that I report to the Imperial Bailiwick the number, circumstances and prosperity of the so-called Schwenckfelders within fourteen days from the day of notification, and furthermore that I gather information concerning other places in this Margraviate, where more of these Schwenckfelders live, and how they conduct themselves there, and to include this also in my report.

In conformity, therefore, with this Imperial command, and in dutiful observance of the same, I diligently inquired as to the number, livelihood, occupation, abode, and other noteworthy particulars of these people (noted in detail in the accompanying enclosures, under A, B, C, D)² in this country, as your Honor will learn from the following truthful account.

It appears that the present Schwenckfelder emigrants, notoriously so named, had the same experience as most of the innocently intentioned reformations. Caspar von Schwenckfeld brought forth certain complaints concerning the residue of evil, supposedly left over in the newly reformed church, and on this account came to odds with Luther, of blessed memory. The latter expressed himself in harsh terms which were appropriated by his zealous adherents to the extent, as often happens, that not only Schwenckfeld, but also all those who were his co-believers, came into great contempt, ridicule and diffusiveness with the dominant evangelical church from which they had taken their origin. Having been expelled from the pulpits and deprived of the Supper, and gradually accustomed or compelled to withdraw from external worship services, it naturally followed that they made provision for their own spiritual unbuilding. Since the aforementioned writer was not inclined to form a new organization, but merely desired a betterment of the abuses in the doctrine and life of that already existing, his adherents did not make any further attempts toward such organization. It is quite probable that as they permitted their children to be baptized by the

parishes, they withdrew themselves from other sacraments, more out of timidity and revulsion than out of personal principle. Finally it came to the point where the children of the evicted parents heard no more about it, forgot it, and what they were opposed to previously, now was agreeable. Seeking easily found reasons and motives, they began to assert the same as correct and just. On this wise, certain of their principles developed and by the aid of their most benevolent and well-read leaders, grew into a regular system.

Withal, these people were tolerated for 200 years in the immediate as well as outlying principalities and manors of the Duchy of Silesia, and were regarded as the best of subjects.

In 1723, the late Baron Hochberg of Polschildern and Armenruh, visited me and with emotion portrayed to me the oppressed state of these poor people, and how he was being hindered by the preachers from befriending them any longer. Furthermore, they besought me secretly to remember them on my contemplated journey to the Imperial Court.

Upon my arrival there, I appealed, in part directly, in part through my agent at that Court, to those persons by whom I thought I would be most sure to be heard. From the Imperial Confessor first of all I received this trustworthy information, that they sincerely regretted that they had pressed matters so far with the Schwenckfelders, a quiet, peaceful, small, and not troublesome people. The consequences certainly had not been foreseen, and the bringing of them to submission had been imagined as much easier. Now, however, this task must be carried to completion, according to the well-known principle: Let it cost what it will. Nothing could help matters more than the facilitation of emigration. This Clerical account was quite comprehensible to me, and was confirmed by the detailed discourse of an Imperial, High Minister who had had the matter in charge from its beginning and during its progress.

When, at an opportune moment, I proved to him incontrovertibly, the injustice, futility and detriment of religious intolerance in Silesia, and when upon his non-acceptance of this odious imputation, I said that the Schwenckfelders even at this very moment were being forced into Catholicism, the Minister began to express astonishment at the frankness of this statement from an Evangelical. "For 200 years," said he, "the Emperor and the Catholic clergy tolerated these people; thereupon the Protestant preachers, among whom he named the preacher (Neander) in Harpersdorf, alleged that they were losing a considerable income because these sectarians withdrew themselves from their congregation, and that they had denounced them at the local offices and before the highest judicial authorities, wherefore as sectarians untolerated by the Roman Empire and not

² Unrecovered.

included by certain peace treaties, they should either be compelled to embrace the Evangelical doctrine or be expelled from the country. For a time this report was concealed and efforts being taken to calm this vehemence, it was hoped that the Protestants would retract their complaint. But, they would not let themselves be advised, and directed the demand for subordination either through appeal to, or entered suit at, the Bohemian Court-Chancery, I have forgotten which, whereupon the investigation was ordered. Nevertheless, the Court veered, and the Schwenckfelders cannot complain, as the deputies, Christoph and Balthasar Hoffman, who lived in Vienna seven years, admit.

"The spirit of persecution, elsewhere however, did not permit itself to be quelled. They (the Protestants) had argued, for so long a time, the hastening of the matter, i. e., the so-called conversion of the Schwenckfelders to the Augsburg Confession, until after thorough investigation, the verdict was pronounced to the effect that the Schwenckfelders, as sectarians who did not align themselves with any of the religions named in the Peace Treaty (of Westphalia 1630) must either leave Silesia or accept the dominant Catholic faith. A great clamor arose over this verdict based to be sure on law and common sense and therefore readily to be expected. Not only the Schwenckfelders complained but also the Lutherans. The latter failed to reflect and blamed the Imperial Commission."

When I again remonstrated with the aforementioned official concerning the oppression of these people and that they were made to suffer for the sins of others, he explained at length that having gone so far in the matter it was impossible on the Catholic side to turn back because according to their Church ordinances such a step could not be justified to the superiors, and for these well considered reasons, excepting for a very subtle and very fortunate connivance in religious matters that anything acceptable never be decreed against. Finally he advised me as follows: "The time for migrating indeed is past, and these people who hitherto deceived themselves with empty hopes, now are bound with goods and chattels to the Imperial Chancery, and have lost the choice of conversion or migration. But under the circumstances," he said, "they (the Catholics) would gladly and willingly connive, and that it was the intention of the Court not to augment the calamity of any one unless by necessity. This should be made clear to these people."

I offered to give this decision to those who inquired in September 1723, and since I had done my duty sufficiently, I did not wish to involve myself further in the matter, and deemed it unnecessary to answer the questions and proposals sent me by the Prussian Secretary and from other sources. These good people were invited to Holland, Brandenburg, our Electorate (Saxony) and else-

where, but did not wish to have anything to do with any of these, for urgent reasons. The deputies in Vienna labored the more for such an end, were treated very kindly and compassionately, were admitted to audience with His Majesty, the Emperor (Charles VI), and were answered in writing. But finally they had to be informed that all their efforts were futile and that they must recall their representatives. The hard-pressed Schwenckfelders now took counsel together and adopted a three-fold resolution. A small part adjusted itself to the Catholic customs, others took a chance on Imperial leniency and on known mainstays here and there, and remained in the land and by their convictions; they were treated with wariness beyond conjecture, so that after fourteen years of continuous persecution in a few villages there are still about 400 souls remaining of whom it is known at Court and elsewhere publicly that they are *outlawed* Schwenckfelders. About one-third of them seized the benefit of emigration at the loss of their property; they besought me confidentially to take them in, and as I advised them under date of December 24, 1725, according to Supplement A, gradually about thirty families and single persons arrived in Berthelsdorf, as is to be seen in Supplement B. Others found in this land a merchant by the name of Schultze who has his warehouse in New Saltza and stays in Holland most of the time. Seventeen persons are in the city of Goerlitz and in the villages. One, however, left for Pennsylvania where he arrived safely. The news received from him is contained in Supplement C. What its effect will be remains to be seen.

In order to give your Honor a proper account of these people, I will give attention to their civil, moral, religious and domestic life.

In the community they are good honest people. They work untiringly, trade diligently and successfully, and are generally active and skillful. They are intelligent officials and farmers, correct payers, equitable business men and very elegant spinners.

In morals they are good theorists and practitioners; they serve everyone, and never let others serve them in vain; they lead in general a quiet, secluded, honorable, pure, humble, unaffected life. When upon closer observation one notices individual eccentricities, they are so rare and insignificant that it would be sinning against these people to mention them.

As far as their religion is concerned, I cannot imagine, for the following reasons, that the Silesian emigrants under the name of Schwenckfelders are anything other than pure Separatists, (1) because neither the Mennonites who are generally taken to be identical with them, nor they themselves permit a special mode of confession for the opinions prevailing among them, but decline the same in every way: (2) because

they in no wise condemn those of their number who have accepted the Evangelical (i. e., Lutheran doctrine) (if they have not done so out of evidently temporal reasons): (3) because despite the fact that they are not too well disposed toward the ecclesiastic ministry they nevertheless permit their children to be baptized by them, and themselves to be married and buried by them; they never make any difficulty about paying the allotment for the support of the ministers, or in attending church services (although if questioned, they do not like to admit it, because thereby they give themselves away): (4) because they do not establish the slightest church organization; their worship services consist in this, that on Sundays they read one or more sermons out of their Postils (among which are also the writings of old evangelical theologians), consequently they have this separatist characteristic that they do not avail themselves of the Communion with other Evangelicals. But how could this alone make a sect of them, for in the bosom of the Evangelical Church there are many thousand people who do not observe it otherwise. The ignorance and hastiness of those magistrates and teachers is to blame, who forced such a state of affairs during the past half century by forbidding all spiritual discussions, prayers, and devotions outside of the church, with a very new and from the beginning of the world unheard-of foolishness and wickedness, and drove good-hearted souls thereby to absolute desperation. I am convinced that in this country alone, many hundred such members would be found, if a secret council or the government of this country had found pleasure in issuing a general prohibition against such private Christian devotions, but thank God, such prohibitions were wisely prevented, though it was advised in particular here and there, and furthermore, had they not cited other excellent reasons adapted to the circumstances, whereby I also in my small way found opportunity to ascribe all the wrongs done to these harassed members of Christ, to the misdemeanor of the governments, and as it will in time become evident, and to hold them painstakingly to Christian tranquillity and resignation, and keep them from annoying the government. But I have reason to feel concerned that in the long run it will not suffice. Unless the debauching alarmists among the preachers be checked, especially in Zittau (where for six or seven years quite insanely and unreasonably proceedings were, and still are, taken against the pious, although they conducted themselves in a quiet manner and above reproach), lamentation amongst the constituted authorities and a sad division and painful results cannot be avoided.

Regarding the state of heart of these good people, there is at least this much evident, that they are not impelled by a zeal to convert others, nevertheless the working of the spirit of God, in many souls

among them, is plainly evident, of which among other things the writing (Supplement E) of the Schwenckfelder, Wiegner (Adam Wiegner) these last days has been to me a clear testimony. If to this be added the fact that these good people not only find themselves in the greatest composure, but also that about 20 families and as many single persons, within the time of their migration, have accepted the Evangelical (Lutheran) doctrine—I await further command as to names and circumstances—it seems to me, that these Silesian exiles (who, however, are not as represented to Your Honor, established in Herrnhut, but in Berthelsdorf), yea, to their spiritual and physical welfare, might be allowed to remain without any hesitation in this Margraviate, into which they have already brought an important commerce, and as the Council of Goerlitz can testify, have done that city and its poverty a great service. But it does not behoove me to give Your Honor more than the report which you desired of me. As for the rest, I remain in constant devotion.

All the while the Schwenckfelders felt uncertain regarding their future, and well they might, for their persecutors had now (1733) caught up with them in Saxony. As the Jesuits were provoked over their own defeat in that they could not win the Schwenckfelders over to the Catholic faith, so they were keenly incensed at the Count for affording them protection. These Jesuit missionaries had for some time been stirring up trouble for all three parties: the Count, the Moravians, and the Schwenckfelders. The Count had become a *persona non grata* at the Court of Vienna, and for reasons previously stated, was banished from Saxony for twelve years, 1736-1748. The Moravians had renounced the Roman faith and the Schwenckfelders could not be converted to it. Their insatiable persecutors, thwarted and baffled and outwitted at every turn, finally taking advantage of a change in rulers on the Saxon throne, prevailed upon the Imperial Government in Vienna to make arrangements to have the Schwenckfelders returned, presumably with the idea, not to convert, but to divert and subvert them some more or to blot them out as a religious body. By April 4, 1733, an imperial edict was issued from Dresden, which specified that Zinzendorf inform them that they would no longer be tolerated in Saxony. It was ascertained that application had been made for their

forced return to Silesia. This information was also imparted to them by friends; and several of the officials at Dresden also hinted that they had better migrate to another place. Fortunately, they were granted a year of grace.

**A Fragmentary Letter—Count Gersdorff to
Count Zinzendorf, After April 17, 1733**

The Schwenckfelders could be listed separately, and since the advice to go has been given in writing to them, the remark could be added that they are ready to depart very soon. If this be not done, you might be accosted about it.

The Moravians, too, could be brought under a separate specification. No time is allowed for proving claims, etc.

So they had to seek refuge again elsewhere, but where? As no place seemed available in the old country they turned their thoughts anew to America. Zinzendorf himself became alarmed and was likewise looking for an abiding place for the Moravians, who were beset with the same uncertainty regarding their future. He had for some time been considering Georgia, which had been planned as a colony for those who were seeking religious tolerance. He accordingly proposed Georgia to the Schwenckfelders also, as the following letter by them shows:

**Letter to Count Zinzendorf by
the Schwenckfelders
After October 23, 1733**

Our grateful answer to Your Excellence's proposition regarding the land St. George (Georgia) we entreat to accept graciously in writing from us, as follows:

Since Your Excellence considers the aforesaid land suitable for us, we make known first of all what kind of a report about it we received from our friends in Holland on October 23rd, namely as follows: "We are constrained to inform you that since our letter, we learned of a very good opportunity to direct you in a body to Georgia which lies a little farther south and is warmer than Pennsylvania. I met a friend in Rotterdam who had sealed letters and a commission from the King of England, signed also by certain members of Parliament, who obligate themselves, (1) to transport all those who wish to go to Georgia, free of any expense for passage, food and drink, and when they arrive there, to assign land to them, and for twelve months thereafter to guarantee subsistence, so that you may get a start and find sub-

sistence in the land. We regard this as a very good opportunity, and as a divine direction. We give it to you as a trial, but expect a prompt reply, in order that all arrangements may be made by correspondence with London, to bring you by way of Altona to London and then to Georgia." So much from Holland.

We are then to expect and hope for similar things of the preparations which your Excellence has made, it being a King's affair; we judge that, even though all our real estate could be converted into cash, we, of ourselves, would not be in a position to carry out such an undertaking, and fear that we would fall prey to slavery, and not get into the land, and be scattered.

If we can live there in liberty as far as external ceremonies are concerned, and in conformity with our beliefs; and if the country will permit of our professional work and accustomed trade, to provide our sustenance without being scattered; and if the taxes there should be so constituted (the laws of the land are entirely unknown to us) that they would not be too heavy and inequitable to our trade to pay (for such an undertaking from which one cannot easily turn back, is to be well considered), we have decided to accept this, which came without our request, in the name of God and in a certain degree as a divine visitation. We request Your Excellence according to Your discretion, to continue negotiations in this matter, and then to inform us what information regarding transportation you, Sir Count, may receive from the English ambassador in Copenhagen. And also, since it is necessary to answer the Hollanders in this case, what Your Excellency considers proper to answer them, because we deem it proper to inquire of them regarding these conditions.

This, however, is to be added, that our group here in Lusatia consists of about thirty families.
(without date and signature, but undoubtedly by a Schwenckfelder committee)

**Second Letter to Count Zinzendorf
by the Schwenckfelders**

Again we beg in writing that our opinion be graciously accepted. Having considered the solicitude and wise counsels of your Excellency, on our account, and found them agreeable, we desire herewith to state with due deference, our opinion and purpose, in our departure from this place and in our settlement in another place. Namely, it is not our purpose and object to be great, or to strive to do great things in the world, but rather to be small, and to direct our purpose and our settlement according to the will of God, that we might remain united in temporal affairs, that our confession of faith might be preserved, and that we might find arrangements, regulations, and conditions whereby we could make a living, so as not to become a burden in a

foreign land. Consequently, we submit this matter to your Excellency's deliberation and most gracious judgment, and beg all together and sincerely to care for us and to give consideration how in such an undertaking there could be a possibility of transportation, of our living together, and of seeking our living under an orderly constitution of a country in fitting obedience, honorably and gratefully, in view of the many mercies, and evidences of the love of God.

Herewith we submit a draft of our petition. Should it not be properly constructed, we beg Your Excellency not to hesitate to tell us:

"High and Noble-born Count of the realm, Gracious Lord—Having obtained information regarding a province in America, called St. George, we might be inclined to migrate thither and set foot on said land: in which event we beseech Your Excellency, on our behalf for information, and negotiations respecting transportation, nature of soil, etc. . . .

"Melchior Kriebel
"George Weiss
"Balthasar Hoffman
"Balthasar Jackel
"and sundry others."

**Letter by Count Zinzendorf to a
Privy-Councilor, Autumn, 1733**

Your Excellency has given me so many evidences of your kindness and affection, that I feel no hesitation to ask your advice regarding some of my hitherto Schwenckfeldian subjects.

From the enclosed copy of a decree (April 4, 1733) sent to our High-Bailiff, Your Excellency will see that the advice to leave has been given them. In accordance therewith, the Schwenckfelders have resolved to go to Holland and from there to Pennsylvania, since they will not be tolerated anywhere in the Roman Empire. I have just learned that they have contracted several ships going to Hamburg before the holidays. (Christmas, 1733)

But, because the aforementioned royal decree specifies that they are to emigrate singly, not in a group, there is an insurmountable difficulty in that the many poor among them are not able to bear the expense of so long and arduous a journey unless the more well-to-do travel with them and help them along.

They have been under the impression that they would be acting in accord with His Royal wish, if they merely travelled singly from here to the ships, and after that remained on the ships until they reached Hamburg, and thus would not attract any attention by their departure. However, if I would safeguard myself in this matter against all responsibility, I cannot refrain from seeking better advice, and therefore wished to ask Your Excellency very humbly

that, out of compassion for these poor oppressed and otherwise certainly upright people, you secure from His Majesty the permission for them to emigrate together, or at least to advise me what to do so that I be free from all responsibility and yet not be unreasonable in my demands upon them. I have no doubt but that Your Excellency will expedite their departure through your very influential intercession, and will ask this mercy also, that you secure a Pass for them, or give me instructions how I may give them something similar so that when they travel through foreign lands they may not be again detained there and their journey be prevented.

As will be seen from the foregoing, Zinzendorf was quite ready to propose that they migrate to Georgia in a body, to which proposal the Schwenckfelders partly agreed, with the proviso, however, that he arrange with King George I of England that they be given liberty of conscience, free worship, free land and free transportation, for some of them were too poor to pay their own travelling expenses. It may have been unfortunate for Zinzendorf, but it was twice, nay thrice, fortunate for the Schwenckfelders that he could not, or at least did not, meet the aforesaid conditions. The officials of the British Government were anxious to have the newly established colony of Georgia thickly populated along the Spanish border. They saw to it that the Count was informed of this project; so he tried to persuade the Schwenckfelders who were living on his baronial possessions to move thither with some Moravians; this they refused to do and said openly and honestly that they were not going to be the Count's vassals, and so moved to Pennsylvania. Then the Count sent off some of his own people to Georgia. When war was looming up between England and Spain, England was bent on making these colonists bear arms, which burden they refused to shoulder, and thus also moved to Pennsylvania.³

**THE SCHWENCKFELDERS AND THE
MORAVIANS IN PENNSYLVANIA
(1734-1742)**

The Schwenckfelders left Saxony Tuesday, April 20, 1734; the migration began when the first family left Berthels-

³ Johann Philip Fresenius — Bewährte Nachrichten von Herrnhutischen Sachen, Leipzig, 1748, Vol. III, p. 754.

dorf, followed daily by others, until on April 28th, forty Schwenckfelder families, numbering one-hundred and eighty people, had left Berthelsdorf and arrived at Pirna on the Elbe to take a boat for Hamburg. Occasionally a writer says that when they came to Altona, in Germany, and to Haarlem in Holland, Christian friends induced them to change their plans and promised them free transportation to Pennsylvania; and that in consequence of this the Georgia plan was dropped, etc.⁴ Friends in Holland did see to it that they had free transportation and subsistence for the journey. The rest of the foregoing statement is wholly erroneous. There is no mention of such a change of plan anywhere in all of Schwenckfelder history, literature or narrative, not even in the Diary of Christopher Schultz who wrote an accurate account of the whole voyage. As far as is known they had their mind set on Pennsylvania before they started. If there had been any change in their plan one would naturally expect to find it in the said Diary.

However, not all of the Schwenckfelders who had fled from Silesia into Saxony in 1726 came to Pennsylvania in 1734, or later. Some continued to live peaceably amongst their Moravian neighbors to the end of their lives. The little meeting-house which they had built was subsequently converted into a dwelling-house and is still used for that purpose. It is cherished as a memorial to a faithful and respected people. During their stay in Berthelsdorf, their dead were buried in the local churchyard. In 1934, on the occasion of the Schwenckfelder pilgrimage to Silesia and Saxony, as a part of the bi-centennial commemoration of the events of 1734 in Schwenckfelder history, a monument was erected in the churchyard at Berthelsdorf to the memory of those Schwenckfelders who found their last resting-place there. For more than half a century after 1734, the Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania exchanged letters with their kin both in Silesia and Saxony. The Moravians of Bethlehem, Pennsyl-

vania, transmitted much of this correspondence, as well as money for the comfort and sustenance of the poverty-stricken brethren in war-ridden Europe.

"It was the Count's idea or plan that they move to Georgia along with some Moravians, but when he could not, or at least did not, meet the conditions which they requested he meet, they openly and freely announced that they were migrating to Pennsylvania; otherwise little was said about it. Even though they had lived under Zinzendorf's protection in the old country, they nevertheless seemed glad that they were in this new country, and partly so because Georgia, as they thought, was not as healthy a place for North Germans as was the Province of Pennsylvania."⁵ So they cannot be blamed for doing what they did even though it displeased the Count that they moved hither and caused him to send Spangenberg and others after them, as will be seen later on.

Zinzendorf's Commissioners Follow the Schwenckfelders to Pennsylvania

A certain writer says that when the Schwenckfelders finally sailed for Pennsylvania, George Boenisch, Christopher Baus, and Christopher Wiegner were sent, at the former's request, by Zinzendorf as their spiritual guides and advisers.⁶ Again be it noted that it is a matter of record that these men were not sent by the request of the Schwenckfelders; no such request was ever made by them; for they were perfectly capable to look after their own temporal and spiritual welfare as far as Zinzendorf was concerned. No reference to, or mention of, such request, or commission, has up to the present time been found anywhere in Schwenckfelder history or literature. The names of these three men are not even mentioned in the Vindication of Caspar Schwenckfeld, or in the Diary of Christopher Schultz where one would naturally expect to find them.

The statement that such a request was made and that these three men accom-

⁴ Joseph Mortimer Levering—A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1903, p. 32.

⁵ "Bewährte Nachrichten, etc.," Vol. III, p. 112.

⁶ William C. Reichel—Memorials of the Moravian Church, 1870, Vol. I, p. 157.

panied the Schwenckfelders, at their request, as their spiritual guides is found in many places in Moravian history and literature. The two facts: (1) That the Count afforded them shelter in Saxony, and (2) that these men were requested by the Schwenckfelders to accompany them as their spiritual guides, are virtually the only worthwhile statements we found in all the research in Moravian history and literature regarding the Schwenckfelders. James Henry in his book, "Sketches of Moravian Life and Character," in the long chapter on Zinzendorf, says ne'er a word about the Count's connection and dealings with the Schwenckfelders; he does not even mention their name. In the chapter on Spangenberg he simply states that when he returned from Georgia he turned his attention to Pennsylvania where a company of Schwenckfelders had settled. "Being desirous of seeking them and of examining their condition he travelled across New Jersey and Pennsylvania (from New York) and discovered them settled in that portion of the Province now known as Montgomery County and was hospitably received by one named Christopher Wiegner."⁷ That quotation is in the main a perversion of the truth. Spangenberg was sent here by the Count, all the facts prove the case.

Moravian Commissioners

About one month after the main body of Schwenckfelders had departed from Saxony, Christopher Wiegner, a Schwenckfelder by birth (son of Adam Wiegner, the gifted scribe for the Schwenckfelders), and two Moravians, George Boenisch and Christopher Baus, as commissioners of Count Zinzendorf, followed the emigrant Schwenckfelders to Holland and accompanied them to the New World. A letter written by them at Rotterdam, on board the *St. Andrew*, June 26, 1734, relates the experiences of the three on their journey on foot from Saxony to Bremen, then by ship to Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Rotterdam. Suspected of being deserters from the army, they were detained variously. On June 15th, they arrived in Bremen. Contrary

winds delayed their arrival in Amsterdam until June 24th. In Haarlem they were questioned again and since the names of Boenisch and Baus were not found on the list of Schwenckfelders going to Pennsylvania, doubt was expressed concerning space on the ship for them. Wiegner arranged payment of 30 Reichsthaler passage-money for each of his companions. The ship was crowded so that it was almost impossible for two people to carry on private conversation. The letter does not fail to tell that a few souls already showed results of the evangelizing work of the three commissioners who hoped that Spangenberg would arrive before the ship would set sail, so as to reinforce them in this work.⁸

Christopher Wiegner's *Diary (1718-1739)* gives an account of the activities of the three commissioners after their arrival in Pennsylvania, where Wiegner acquired land and his two companions made their home with him most of the time. Says H. W. Kriebel:⁹

"Wiegner in his diary makes references to his coming to Pennsylvania, and we may linger a moment on these in view of their historic significance.

"An entry of December 29, 1733, shows that Zinzendorf sent word to Wiegner that he was to hold himself in readiness to serve as a commissioner. Subsequent events make it seem probable that this proposed commission referred to the contemplated accompanying of the Schwenckfelders by him. It should perhaps be noted that these people had received notice in April, 1733, that in a year's time migration would have to take place. To be entrusted by Zinzendorf with such a charge at the age of twenty-one was no small honor.

"March 28th, Wiegner had a lengthy discussion with Spangenberg, who expressed himself quite freely, saying that if he were in his place and saw any chance of accomplishing results, he should regard it a sufficient reason for going with such a body of people. Between the 20th and 28th of April, the Schwenckfelders at Berthelsdorf all left for Pennsylvania, i.e., all who did go

⁸ Herrnhut Unitäts Archiv, R 14 A 21. 2.

⁷ James Henry — *Sketches of Moravian Life and Character*, Philadelphia, 1859.

⁹ Christopher Wiegner, the Towamencin Diarist, pp. 5-6, 11-18.

left during those days. Four days later, Wiegner and Spangenberg held another consultation, when the latter asked whether Wiegner would be willing to have him as a travelling companion. May 12th they met again and agreed on plans for their journey to the sea. May 13th, Christopher (Baus?) said he had in mind to go with Wiegner to Pennsylvania—consent to which was given three days later. May 24th it seems it was still an open question whether Spangenberg could go with Wiegner; the question was decided, however, the following day, it being agreed that he should follow fourteen days later. Wiegner, Baus, and Boenisch agreed the same day to travel together, and on the following day, May 26th, started on their journey to overtake the Schwenckfelders.

"These few scattered references seem to suggest at least that as temporal guides these three can not have had very definite plans or duties. Collateral evidence shows that Spangenberg did not follow as proposed, but stayed behind and became the overseer of other emigrants later who went to Georgia and the Carolinas. It may be in place also to remark at this point that Zinzendorf was anxious to convert the Schwenckfelders, and that this furnished the motive probably why commissioners were sent.

"We may profitably consider for a minute a few of Wiegner's acquaintances and thus incidentally note some of the callers that enjoyed the hospitality of the Wiegner home:

"A Schoenfeld was a frequent visitor. He was probably the party with whom the Wiegners lived in Germantown before removing to Towamencin.

"Gruber, Dewald, both the Macks Gmelen, came and went.

"Occasionally a Quaker minister would drop in on them, staying, at least once, eleven days. Another time Spangenberg is reported to have brought a Quaker minister with him. One day a Mr. Schlinghoff called; whether he was an ancestor of the Slingluffs of our day I am not able to say. Indians even came with their wives to be entertained and to make inquiry for Spangenberg.

"George Weiss, the minister of the

Schwenckfelders, and other leading members of the same faith of course were frequent visitors. Wiegner's faith was much broader, however, than the faith of the little body of his fellow-emigrants. He, for instance, makes the interesting note that in Germantown he attended a meeting at the home of his friend, John Eckstein, where religious matters were discussed in the presence of adherents of the following faiths: Lutheran, Reformed, Quaker, Baptist, Schwenckfelder, Episcopalian, Separatist, Pietist—such a gathering seems to foreshadow the religious conferences held in 1742 under the leadership of Zinzendorf.

"Time scarcely permits more than a mere reference to the visits by representatives of the Ephrata Kloster, coming and going from the banks of the Cocalico, near Ephrata, in Lancaster County. April 22, 1737, he notes the fact that two 'Siebentaeger' [Seventh-Day Adventists] called and stayed. The next reference to this brotherhood is found the following October, when he writes as follows: 'When I came home I found two "Siebentager" at the house. They were Peter Miller and the younger Heckerlein. We had a warm discussion. They maintained the following: there is always a church of Christ on earth, that they are the said church, that the humanity of Christ was to be found with them alone, that Christ had given it to them. They claimed they were the church to whom the new covenant was entrusted and asked us to come and see whether we could not in truth find God in their midst.' Wiegner does not say how long the brothers remained, but the following November he made this entry: 'Another "Siebentaeger" was here.' The impression made by these visitors must have been rather deep, for in a few days we read that Wiegner and Spangenberg discussed the advisability of writing to the brotherhood direct to ask whether they endorsed what the two visitors had proclaimed. Whether the letter was written I am unable to say. The following July five members of the same brotherhood called. These insisted very strongly on their own theories and totally re-

jected the life and work at the Wiegner home. To our diarist they said that his life did not harmonize at all with the teaching of Jesus, that he would first have to sell all, give to the poor and come to them at Ephrata to be baptized, maintaining even that no one could be saved who did not obtain his faith through them. It seems natural to read that the two schools got farther apart as a consequence of such affirmations. Unfortunately these were not the only good people in the world who thought they could place in the hollow of their hands God's power to save the world, or grasp with their limited outlook the mystery of salvation.

"In the early part of 1739 a party left Wiegner's on a visiting tour lasting two weeks. On this trip the brethren in 'Canestock' were called upon, causing our diarist to make this entry: 'Wir kamen aus einander,' or as much as to say 'we had a fallout.' It was a few months after this visit that Wiegner had his sick spell and soul-anguish, partly on account of the views of these brethren to which reference has been made.

"To supplement along this line we will quote from Vol. I of *Memorials of the Moravian Church* as follows: 'The Wiegner home was interesting as having been the home of the first Moravians in Pennsylvania, and also as the headquarters of The Associated Brethren of the Skipack, who met there for the worship of God and for religious edification. Among these worthies were Henry Frey, John Koken, George Merkel, Christian Weber, John Bonn, Jacob Bonn, Jacob Wenzel, Jost Schmidt, William Bossen and, Jost Becker, of Skipack; Henry Antes, William Frey, George Stiefel, Henry Holstein, and Andrew Frey, of Frederick township; Matthias Gmelen and Abraham Wagner, of Matetsche; John Bertolet, Francis Ritter, and William Potts, of Oley; John Bechtel, John Adam Gruber, Blasius Mackinet, and George Benzel, of Germantown.'

"As another item of interest it may be noted also in this connection that May 5th, according to our diarist, Nitschman came to his home, that May 7th three 'Siebentaeger' came and that May 8th

Spangenberg and Nitschman went to 'Cainstock,' as Wiegner puts it. Turning to Dr. Hark's *Translation of the Chronicon Ephratense* we find the following interesting note: 'In the year 1739 two delegates of their denomination (the Moravians) namely, Spangenberg and Nitschman, arrived in Pennsylvania, who met with great success, and might have proved to great edification to many had they had more experience, and not been novices themselves. After the Brethren had heard of them, three went down the country and visited them at Wiegner's, a venerable family, descendants of the Schwenckfelders; and because at that time the fire of first love was still burning, their spirits united into one, so that they returned with them. When telling of their institutions at Herrnhut, the Brethren became so perceptibly moved by it that little was wanting and some would have accompanied them thither. Having tarried a few days in the settlement, and also been present at a love-feast, they were dismissed with a kiss of peace, as became the messengers of such a renowned people.'

"But we must not linger longer with our interesting monastic brotherhood on the Cocalico and hasten to pick up a few of the data furnished by our diarist relating to the Moravians, without attempting to furnish the historic connections. We have already noted the strong friendship between Spangenberg and Wiegner and the commission given to Spangenberg to accompany a band of immigrants to the Carolinas and Georgia. After he had performed this mission he started north to take up his work in Pennsylvania. Wiegner says in his notes of March 25, 1736: "I had a great longing for Spangenberg, and on this account said to the brethren that it was time for him to come." April 3rd he was engaged in plowing and came home in the evening tired, and yet he said if he knew that Spangenberg was in the city he would go that very night to meet him twenty miles away. The next day at dinner he had such a yearning that he said to Boenisch he must come, and while they were talking in stepped Spangenberg to their agreeable surprise. Two days later the two started off to-

gether to visit the brethren in Germantown. A month later Nitschman arrived to stay three weeks, during which time the trip to Ephrata was made before referred to.

"June 20th of the same year we see Wiegner, Spangenberg, and Boenisch going across the fields to attend divine services at Melchior Kriebel's. Spangenberg addresses the meeting and Boenisch offers prayer. Offence must have been given for during the coming week the Schwenckfelder minister came and told Wiegner and his co-laborers that they were a disturbance in the Schwenckfelder services and should leave them alone, it being better for each party to go its own way. Weiss told them plainly that it would be useless to try to make Moravians out of the Schwenckfelders.* The diarist himself seems to have been spoken against the most strongly. Wiegner was not trusted by Weiss, although Spangenberg was received very kindly by him.

"July 10th Spangenberg started for St. Thomas to return November 27th. April 9, 1737, George Neisser came to the home of Wiegner. He had been sent by the brethren in Georgia to report their distress to Spangenberg and urge him to go to London to lay their grievances before the 'Trustees for the Colony of Georgia.' He had probably called before this as the question of Spangenberg's going had been discussed a month earlier. The Schwenckfelders seem to have advised him to make the trip to Georgia. Spangenberg accordingly goes to Germantown, where his friends strongly oppose his leaving. Wiegner reports that Spangenberg and Eckstein sailed for Georgia May 11th, and that Spangenberg returned to his house September 7, 1737. A few weeks later Gruber and Eckstein called and brought the news that the latter had written a very hard letter against the Moravians, to which, however, the company seemingly could not agree.

"December 5, 1737, Wiegner and Spangenberg made a trip to Philadelphia. On the way they seem to have had quite a warm discussion. Spangen-

berg wished to introduce special regulations respecting clothing, eating, and sleeping, according to Wiegner. Spangenberg finally promised to let the matter rest, upon which they loved each other and rejoiced together. The latter part of the following January they together visited the single brethren in Germantown, but they could not extend the brotherly hand according to Paul. A casual reference shows also that the brethren on the Skippack were considering the feasibility of establishing an orphanage.

"To supplement these incohesive references to Spangenberg we may be permitted to quote a few words from the Moravian historian, Reichel. He says: 'Here (at Wiegner's) he remained for a considerable time and from occasional remarks in his letters to the Brethren in Germany, as well as from other sources, it is evident that the learned Professor of Theology took many practical lessons in ploughing, threshing and other agricultural labors, by which he became well qualified for future usefulness in the economies of Bethlehem and Nazareth. When Peter Boehler came to Pennsylvania, in 1740, he found that Spangenberg was well known everywhere and often heard it said "that he had come to Pennsylvania a very wise man; but had returned from the high-school much wiser."'

"This exhibit will not be quite adequate without some reference to the Schwenckfelders. As a background to the few selected references in the diary it is in place to say succinctly, that Zinzendorf termed himself the appointee of Jesus as reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion, that Wiegner was a liberal-hearted Schwenckfelder who was not always subservient to the prevailing sentiment of the Schwenckfelder community, that Baus, Boenisch, Neisser, Spangenberg found at least one purpose in their coming to Pennsylvania in the assigned duty to try to convert the Schwenckfelders to the Moravian faith, and that George Weiss, the pastor among the Schwenckfelders, knew of the designs of Zinzendorf and his deputies.

"In October, 1735, Wiegner and Boenisch made a trip to Goshenhoppen, the

* *Vide* Schwenckfeldiana, No. 2, 1941, pp. 8, 29-30.

home of quite a number of Schwenckfelders. In the evening Wiegner and George Weiss, the minister among the Schwenckfelders, had a long and warm discussion, but could not agree. A few weeks later, Weiss addressed a letter to the Schwenckfelders and called upon them to elect a minister and deacons. November 9, 1735, an election was therefore held by nine Schwenckfelders, of whom Wiegner was one, with the result that Weiss was chosen as Vorsteher, or minister, and Balzer Hoffman and David Seipt were chosen as eltesten, or deacons.

"January 1, 1736, Boenisch attended services and was permitted to address the meeting, a matter sufficiently out of the usual course of events to make it worthy of record. A few days later, Wiegner wrote a letter to Weiss, seemingly sufficiently important to bring Weiss to his house about a week later. The letter was discussed and Weiss spoke quite firmly to Wiegner, moderating, however, so as to give Wiegner the privilege to attend services. Before parting Weiss begged him to come, and Wiegner gave his consent. For some time the Wiegner people seem to have attended the Schwenckfelder services quite regularly. Weiss called upon them in July, and showed himself very agreeable. He and Spangenberg in particular seemed to understand each other quite well. Wiegner was also accorded the right to speak and ask questions in meeting—Wiegner was continually getting into hot water. Thus we find that in February, 1737, Weiss called upon him and wanted to know what he had said against Weiss and his methods. He replied to Weiss in an humble and contrite spirit with the result that they became reconciled again. Weiss expressed himself strongly against the formation of a church, it seems. Within a month Weiss called on Wiegner again and they seem to have had a blessed time. Wiegner was moved to jot down the thought that God's grace was really beginning to manifest itself among the Schwenckfelders. A few months later he makes the remark that Weiss gave a very powerful address, the like of which he had never heard from him. That matters did not appear very encouraging to Wiegner is shown, however, by his expressed long-

ing that day might soon break forth among the Schwenckfelders. About the same time he records the observation that George Neisser who had been living with him but a few months could not reconcile himself to their dealings with the Schwenckfelders.

"July 28th, there was to be a general meeting of the Schwenckfelders in Skip-pack, probably now Lower Salford. Weiss had become sick in Goshenhoppen, so that he could not attend. Hoffman, his assistant, took his place and spoke quite freely. He strongly opposed the formation of a sect or separate organization among the Schwenckfelders.

"January 19, 1738, Wiegner made the following entry in his diary: 'Attended services at Kriebel's. George Weiss said the Bible was a sealed book and was only for the saints ('Heilig-recommandirte')—hence his 1500 hymns and other literature. This affected me so much that I made a loud exclamation, and Brother Spangenberg did the same, which stirred up considerable uproar. George Weiss wrote a letter to which we replied again.' This stormy meeting meant much. An extensive correspondence followed. The following April Wiegner wrote: 'George Weiss rejects us,' and Spangenberg wrote: 'The Schwenckfelders form themselves wholly into a sect and completely close themselves against all others who do not approve of their cause, whereby consciences are bound and the spirit of Christ is quenched. We do not say much, but have expressed ourselves orally and in writing.' Reichel says: 'In 1738, when visiting the Schwenckfelders for the third time, he (Spangenberg) complained of their exclusive sectarian spirit by which the consciences are burdened; but it is still more likely that Spangenberg's "too learned to be an apostle," and lacking experience did not always meet them and especially their minister, George Weiss, with that Christian candor and liberality which alone awakens confidence, and which in later years was the brightest ornament in Spangenberg's career.'"

George Weiss and the Moravians

The Count, thwarted in his plans and efforts to corral the Schwenckfelders and

to win them over permanently into his fold and, if necessary, coerce them to accept his faith, and displeased, if not disgusted, with the way his plans were going awry, continued his schemes after they had settled in Pennsylvania. Terming himself the appointee of Jesus Christ to reform the Schwenckfelder religion, this former apparent benefactor of the Schwenckfelders became their last, their most presumptive, and final persecutor in the New World, whither they had fled at great sacrifice, suffering and hardships to obtain freedom and peace from all interference. Zinzendorf ordered several men to accompany the Schwenckfelder emigrants to Pennsylvania in order to convert them to the Moravian faith. Two of these made their home with the third, who was Christopher Wiegner, their erstwhile liberal-minded Schwenckfelder acquaintance in Saxony. Christopher Wiegner was of an emotional disposition, easily moved to anger or to tears. On October 25, 1735, he traveled with George Weiss to Goshenhoppen. The other two men were probably also in the company. George Weiss, the pastor of the Schwenckfelders, knew the designs of these Moravians and after his encounter with them on this journey amongst his flock in Goshenhoppen, he advocated that the Schwenckfelders appoint a minister and deacons. It was obvious to him that these traveling Moravians were carrying out the instructions of their master to try to convert his flock to Lutheranism. It became necessary to be vigilant against disintegration.

In addition to the several men whom the Count ordered to accompany the Schwenckfelders to Pennsylvania, he now also instructed Spangenberg to leave his work in Georgia and to proceed to Pennsylvania to take charge of the work begun by Boenisch among the Schwenckfelders; he had been with them two years and had lived with Christopher Wiegner on the latter's farm in Towamencin Township, Montgomery County. Boenisch returned to Europe in 1737. So Spangenberg left for Pennsylvania on March 15, 1736, with letters of introduction and recommendations from Governor Oglethorpe to Thomas Penn. Bishop Nitschman, who had

taken the second band of Moravians to Georgia, was with him. On April 4, 1736, Spangenberg arrived at the home of Christopher Wiegner, making it his headquarters until his recall to Europe in 1739. In 1737, George Neisser came back from Georgia and also took up his abode at Wiegner's. So for a while there were four of them at Wiegner's and all imbued with the Moravian spirit. One might think it looked bad for the Schwenckfelders.

As soon as Spangenberg arrived he visited the Schwenckfelders in their several settlements. His chief care and concern was, as it was of Boenisch and Baus, to bring the Schwenckfelders over to the Moravian faith; and particularly, to lead Wiegner and his co-religionists into a clearer insight into the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. The presumption, as if these people did not know where to find the truth! He was going to visit these people, offer them the peace which he himself enjoyed; be at their service, hear, ask, and answer questions as they may require, hoping that God himself might open a door. He spared neither toil nor effort to gain his objective. He did not hesitate to assist his host on the farm. He even tried to fraternize very freely with the Schwenckfelders in a subtle and docile manner by attending their meetings and by adopting their mode of dress. One of the Brethren narrates these particulars regarding his outfit: "His garb was similar to that of the Schwenckfelders. He wore a gray coat of coarse linen woven by these people; it was without pockets and without buttons and was fastened with loops." And all done for the purpose of ingratiating himself into the good graces of these people. "One special endeavor of Spangenberg was to bring over the scattered Schwenckfelders to his faith."

Spangenberg did not let up his questionable efforts and motives to wind himself into the good graces of the Schwenckfelders. He hob-nobbed freely with them; he intruded himself into their meetings; tried to take part in their discussions and transactions, none of which was any of his concern; and in general made himself so officious until he and his satellites were told to let the

Schwenckfelders alone. Wiegner relates that on June 20, 1736, they attended a Schwenckfelder meeting at Melchior Kriebel's, on which occasion Spangenberg spoke and Boenisch prayed, and that both the address and the prayer were offensive to Pastor Weiss, who called at the Wiegner home the following week to tell them they were a disturbance in the Schwenckfelder services and should let them alone; that it was useless for them to try to convert the Schwenckfelders to the Moravian Lutheran Church.¹⁰ Probably Spangenberg's "career" among the Schwenckfelders is fairly well summed up in these words: At first, for a considerable time, he made much ado over the Schwenckfelders; he attended their meetings; he adopted their mode of dress, associated much with them; they tolerated him for a while, even though they knew his attitude and principles while still in the old country; but they were not willing to become more intimate with him and more submissive. Finally, George Weiss, who was wholly disinclined to adopt the Herrnhuter form, and particularly not their outward ceremonies and manner of teaching, forbade him to teach any longer in their meetings or to take part in them.¹¹

"In these very critical times for the newly settled Schwenckfelder immigrants, George Weiss loyally and vigorously defended his widely scattered flock and the Schwenckfeldian doctrines by tongue and pen, answering the controversial questions raised by the Moravian representatives, e. g., whether the spoken word of a divinely gifted teacher, by virtue of the power of God, can reach the soul; and: Does the external word and voice reach only the external man or does it go deeper? Weiss' answers by letter to all such questions were long and explicit.

"In another letter to the Moravian Bishop, Weiss candidly reminded him how submissive he appeared to be when he first attended Schwenckfelder meetings; how very docile he was, telling

them that his purpose was, in the name of love, to keep harmony. But, Weiss says, he knew that in reality this was not so. He knew that the question about the Word of God and the ministry was the chief point of controversy. He risked sending Spangenberg a letter and received a counter-reply. Then he sent another letter, including a document about the apostolic ministry. Thereupon Spangenberg gave Weiss five questions which the latter answered, but received no reply, as he received no further replies to any notes or questions which he sent him.

"George Weiss propounded 84 questions necessary for consideration which have been preserved. They bear no date, but very obviously belong to the period of his great struggle to maintain the liberty of the Schwenckfelders against the Moravian representatives of Count Zinzendorf, 1736-1739, who were intent on drawing the Schwenckfelders into their faith for the purpose of acquiring great economic assets for their colony. These 84 questions reveal the nature of the topics under discussion by the two parties and the extent of the thought and study devoted by Weiss to his work of keeping his flock intact. He stoutly, untiringly and successfully defended his Schwenckfelder flock and doctrines against these latest representatives of European persecution and commercialism. They finally retreated beyond the sea, having been routed by the scholarly pen and powerful theological arguments of the meekest man in Pennsylvania, George Weiss." *

The Count Himself Arrives in Pennsylvania

By this time Zinzendorf had sent over virtually all his heralds and advance agents. So by the end of 1741, November 30th, he himself and his daughter and a few other persons arrived in New York where he remained a few days and then set out for Philadelphia where he arrived December 10th. One week later, December 18th, he was out in German-

¹⁰ Howard Wiegner Kriebel — The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania.

¹¹ Fresenius — Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen, Vol. III, p. 114.

* Schwenckfeldiana, Vol. I, No. 2, 1941. See the same issue also for an extended discussion of similar controversial questions.

town; on the following morning he started out with his group for Skippack, where he preached, but with scant satisfaction; his stay was short. He continued with his retinue to Falckner Swamp to see Henry Antes, who a few days later, at Zinzendorf's direction and dictation, issued the noted circular letter inviting all religious denominations to a conference in Germantown, "not for the purpose of disputing but to treat in a peaceful way of articles of faith and the most essential articles of Christian doctrine."

Zinzendorf's First Conference

The first meeting was scheduled for New Year's Day, 1742. In a letter of March 26, 1742, Christopher Saur says that only a few people were in favor of such conferences. The Seventh-Day Adventists sent three deputies to see what could be done and whether anyone could teach them anything. The Dunkards were not agreed over the matter, because the Count had a letter, or patent, from the Bishop of London; thus one could see readily in whose name he had come. They let it be known that if he wanted anything from them in the way of articles of faith he might come to them. Two or three, however, did come, partly out of curiosity and partly by persuasion. Two, or three Mennonites came, not as deputies, wondering what it all might be about. The Schwenckfelders already knew him only too well, for they had lived with him; of them, none came. But the Count prevailed upon two in Germantown to attend for just a little while; why, they did not know, but when they saw that they were wanted only that it might be noised abroad that they too were represented, they went home.

The purpose of the meeting was hardly stated when trouble arose. The Mennonites and the Schwenckfelders were scornfully reproached by Zinzendorf, presumably because they virtually refused to take part in the conference. This uncalled-for act caused considerable disturbance, which was decidedly increased when a tailor named Schierwagen criticized Zinzendorf for his uncharitable expressions.

By this time the scant recognition given his preaching, the ignoring of his

conference, the displeasure caused by the Schwenckfelders not going to Georgia, the lack of responsiveness to the labors of his subordinates, the obsequious flattery of some of his other helpers, and the failure of his colony in Georgia made the Count irritable and put him in a frame of mind which induced him to act indiscreetly and to commit imprudent and injudicious acts; of such acts there was now a plenty and they followed fast.

On the day of Epiphany, January 6, 1742, Zinzendorf preached once again in Skippack at Christopher Wiegner's place; here he made a violent attack upon the Schwenckfelders. Trouble was brewing and storm clouds were rising. It would seem that on the same day eight Schwenckfelders and their elders called on Zinzendorf in Germantown to welcome him as their former protector and also as a matter of respect. He assailed them and made violent threats that he would exercise his alleged power over them whithersoever they might go; which power, he asserted, they had delegated to him in writing, and had subscribed to it. He threatened to tear their children from them if they did not become converted. They answered very courteously and discreetly that they hoped that such might not be the case. Furthermore, they had no knowledge of having at any time subscribed to any such instrument as he would make them believe. They challenged him to prove it.

He also reproached their ministers most indignantly; he called them wolves, and what not. He assailed especially George Weiss, one of the elders who tried most conscientiously and to the best of his understanding to set up and maintain a truly exemplary Christian life and conduct among young and old. According to the testimony of their neighbors these people have always deported themselves in a most becoming manner and are exceedingly charitable. They are not given to alluring and drawing others into their fold.¹² Zinzendorf was very indiscreet and acted very irrationally when he spoke so disparagingly of a people so well spoken of.

¹² Fresenius — *Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen*, Vol. III, p. 237.

The Zinzendorf Inquisition

It will be recalled that Zinzendorf preached at Wiegner's place on Epiphany, January 6, 1742, and that seemingly on the same day several Schwenckfelders called on him in Germantown. A great controversy arose at both places and a very heated discussion ensued, during the course of which Zinzendorf questioned the Schwenckfelders concerning their faith, their organization, the hymns they were using, and other points. They answered politely and unconcernedly. The "visiting" Schwenckfelders wrote down what took place and communicated it themselves.

I

Zinzendorf—Have you become a congregation? (N.B., according to Zinzendorf's idea.)

Answer—Yes, we naturally have an arrangement among us.

II

Zinzendorf—Who has George Weiss's place now, since he is dead?

Answer—We have given the charge of preaching over to one [Balthasar Hoffman] who is to preach to us in a plain manner and according to his ability.

III

Zinzendorf—Do you have a confession of faith?

Answer—Yes, we showed it to you ere this. (It is arranged according to the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, together with the church service pertaining to it; the same with the government.)

Zinzendorf—This confession of faith and your hymns (hymns of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren) which you use are in many places contradictory.

Answers—That is not against us, for they have been corrected to agree with our confession of faith.

Zinzendorf—I, too, corrected many myself; one can correct to one's shame; one might be correcting every year. (No answer; the friends knew how much uncertainty there must be if one must be correcting every year.)

IV

Zinzendorf—Schwenckfeld taught error, and rejected the Word and external rites, or ceremonies.

Answer—Schwenckfeld does not reject the external rites or ceremonies; he makes a clear distinction between things external and things internal and gives to each what belongs to it and puts each in its proper place. We recognize no error in his teaching.

Zinzendorf—George Weiss supported the Schwenckfelders a long time; he led you around by the nose and introduced some terrible errors. I thought it was to be different with you.

Answer—George Weiss did not teach error, but taught the truth faithfully.

Zinzendorf—The conduct of your preaching is incorrect; whereas from ten to twelve points are brought forth and commented upon, Christ's death is only alluded to and then only at the end of the discourse. Had I known that you were not going to be a congregation, you would never have had a chance to get out of Saxony.

[N.B. This took place at a funeral and was reported to the Count. But the method was as follows: The fundamental idea was that death is (1) determined by God; (2) the uncertainty of its occurrence; (3) time ends; (4) the accounting to which it leads. Hereupon some thought was given on how to prepare for death:

[a. By renouncing the world in view of its transitoriness and vexatiousness, and by renouncing one's self in view of one's own corruption and opposition to the will of God.

[b. By the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures on account of their worthiness and benefit, and their pointing to a godly life because it checks the flesh in its course toward evil.

[c. By reflecting on the Fall of Man, because through it death ensued, and by contemplating the suffering of Christ since he himself tasted of death and won a glorious death.

[d. By calling to mind the love of God, in view of the creation, of guidance and of salvation, and by the recovering of the trust in Him, in view of the fact that He will let that come to pass which

has been promised, achieved and offered.

[e. By ceaseless prayer, since God is worthy of being called upon and will grant what is asked for, and by awakening a hope for eternal life in view of the poverty of this life in contrast to the promised eternal life.]

Answer—This is not it, but it can happen according to methods of preaching where circumstances are presented which point to the passion and death of Christ, and then in conclusion specify the death of Christ. But this is also not the method with us.

V

Zinzendorf—He has declared his position that he insists on the understanding of the letter, and is going to appear with us before the throne of God with the letter.

Answer—This is terrible to listen to.

Zinzendorf—If you become a congregation and introduce the Sacraments properly, then my brethren and I will yield to you; but if you do not, then your doctrine is false and the spirit of God which converts souls is not in you, and I will not rest, but with copious tears and many sighs I will exert all my strength so that I may tear souls away from you, and thus secure your children for my Saviour that they may be torn away from error and rescued from hell.

Answer—After many attacks on us and on the truth, we left Germany; and should it be that God would permit that here also we could not remain in peace, there would surely be some other spot reserved for us. We do not intend to depart from our confession.

Zinzendorf—I will still follow you, and where I cannot go I will send my assistants. I will persecute you until I have destroyed you and have torn your children from you.

VI

Zinzendorf—When a right teacher preaches it must show itself in the conversion of souls; otherwise he is a false prophet. Salvation is in the preached word.

Answer—The Word of God in the letter is not the Word of God which makes for salvation; but the Word which the

Lord himself uttereth and which proceedeth out of his mouth.

Zinzendorf—Eternal life exists in the Scriptures; and I will not rest until I have torn you asunder and have carried off your children.

Answer—Again we have cause for bringing our children before the Lord and to commit them to his care so that they may not be drawn into error.

VII

Zinzendorf—Every baptism when it is administered, is according to the ordinance of Christ; and if I let go infant baptism I will be in agreement with the Dunkards.

Answer—We presume the Dunkards baptize according to their view, believing it to be in agreement with the divine will, but we do not hold that they baptize in accordance with the ordinances of Christ.

Zinzendorf—I do not maintain that all Dunkards are Christians, but their baptism is in agreement with the institution of Christ.

VIII

Zinzendorf—You were about eight years under my protection; it cannot be said that I persecuted you temporally or spiritually.

Answer—No!

Zinzendorf—But now I have power over you; and it is my bounden duty to save your souls.

Zinzendorf—We have rejected the mystics and mysticism entirely as a doctrine which does not belong in the Gospels. The pure letter is with the Gospels. The mystics introduce a terrible error into Christianity.

Answer—Mysticism is an excellent and helpful doctrine. Thanks be to God that we have directions for such a method of teaching, so that by reading the sayings of Christ and of his apostles we can learn lessons therefrom for exercise, practice and for examination.

Zinzendorf—It is easier to preach to Satan than to you and such sectarians who do adhere to the letter. Even Satan says "Yes."

Answer—Does Satan then become converted when he says "Yes"?

Zinzendorf—He does not become converted, but it redounds to the praise of God.

IX

Zinzendorf—With the right kind of preacher souls must become converted in every meeting, or at least in two weeks.

Answer—Are all converted then, who come to you?

Zinzendorf—No one can come to me and not be converted.

Conclusion—We have cause for lifting our hearts anew to God with a sigh and feel resolved that He will stand by and will uphold the correct knowledge of recognized truth.

Zinzendorf—With the elders of the Schwenckfelders I will have nothing more to do, only with the Schwenckfelders.

N.B.—In the ninth point, among other things, the Count asked what is meant when it is said that God revealed himself in the Scriptures and had indicated his will, and one was to understand something else thereby, and gave as an example: "If I should say to somebody, 'Bring me the soup bowl' and the person addressd did not know what I wanted."¹³

Controversy grew hotter and hotter with each parley and meeting, both at Wiegner's place and in Germantown. On January 10, 1742, Zinzendorf and Bishop Nitschman called on John Eckstein in Germantown. Here the discussion again turned to the Schwenckfelders. Eckstein defended them earnestly; so these men got into a heated argument; Zinzendorf repeated what he had said before to the Schwenckfelders. His ire grew higher and higher until he finally said that he had power over them and would pray the Lord to spew them out of his mouth.

So persistent was he in his determination not to let these people get beyond his reach that he actually accused them before the Governor because they had migrated without his consent. And he even consulted a magistrate concerning the power which he imagined he had over them; but he was told that if he had not paid their ship-passages he could not possibly have any power over them.

¹³ Fresenius *Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen*, Vol. III, p. 252.

Second Conference

It was now time for the second conference which met on January 14-15 in Falkner Swamp. The Schwenckfelders sent no delegates to this conference nor to any subsequent ones. It is possible that the fracas and tumult which Zinzendorf started on the day of Epiphany was noised and bruited abroad. Eckstein says that his neighbors heard about it and took his treatment of the Schwenckfelders amiss and thought it ill of him. This affray cannot but have come to the attention of the members of the conference and thus afforded the Schwenckfelders sufficient excuse for staying away. At the third conference in Oley, February 10-12, a proposition was brought forward stating that if the Schwenckfelders had any complaints to make against Zinzendorf they should present them at this conference. There is nothing in the record to show that they took any action on this proposition; very likely they ignored it as they had many of his other irrational statements and threats.

The last conference was held at the house of Edward Evans, on Race Street. According to reports things were done in a high-handed manner; the several groups were hackled once more and combed down. The following is the "rating" the Schwenckfelders received: "The Schwenckfelders so-called are in a lamentable condition. They have no system of their own. In Germany they allow their children to be baptized; here they do not. Those who offered to aid them they have rejected. Brother Thurnstein (Zinzendorf) brought with him, and besides received here, such views of them as mislead him into a severity which they indeed deserved, but which their accusers deserve much more. . . . He also sought a release from them showing that they would decline his duty toward them during their lives; this they returned unsigned. He has at this time a definite assurance from a sufficient number of them that they neither need him nor expect to unite with him."

Schwenckfelder Steadfastness

The Schwenckfelders had evidently been thinking of taking a stand against

the Count, for we find that Caspar Kriebel and Christopher Schultz were conducting some correspondence, asking one another about the best method of procedure. The latter raised the question of making a defense against the Count, whereupon the former in a letter of March 7, 1742, said:

It is the opinion of myself and of others that it is not advisable to attend said conference. Hitherto we had nothing to do with him. He indeed makes pretensions against us, but they are European and not American.

This exchange of opinion took place just a few days before the meeting of the Fourth Conference, March 10-12, 1742, and in Germantown. It needs to be noted that when the Count came to the meeting and found only those present who were one in mind and spirit, the Mennonites and Schwenckfelders being absent, he evidently thought there was no object in holding the meeting, because there would be no opportunity for wrangling and for abusing those who disagreed with him, so he moved to have the meeting dissolved, but he was overruled by the conference. As far as the records show this was the last time the Schwenckfelders "figured" in any way in the conferences.

A few weeks after the heated discussion which Zinzendorf and David Nitschman had with Eckstein at the latter's house, January 10, 1742, Eckstein wrote the Count the following admonitory letter:

Dear Count von Zinzendorf:

When you and David Nitschman visited me at my house about two weeks ago, you used some very harsh language against the Schwenckfelders. You said you would execute the power which you claim you have over them, and that you would not desist; if they did not submit themselves to you, you would beseech the Lord to spew them out of his mouth, and suiting the action to your words, you actually did spew several times. These words at once lay heavily upon my heart, and I immediately remarked that I would have thought that where the spirit and love of Christ prevailed there could be no such power and right, for it is written in the Prophets, "Let those go whom you have in bondage."¹⁴ You became very angry as I said these words and ran indignantly out of the house. In as much

as I experienced much uneasiness over this conduct of yours, I ought to have reminded you again of your expressions, that such expressions are wholly unscriptural and not at all commensurate with the spirit of Christ. But I neglected to do so because of bashfulness. The matter, however, became known among my neighbors, several of whom out of Christian love, reminded you of your harsh utterances, but which you, as I hear, try to twist and cover up.

When I became aware of this I could not refrain from confronting you with your own words whether you might not reflect upon your inner self and praise God who has eyes like flames of fire and is a judge of mind and thought, with whom everything is Yea and Amen; *yea* what is *yea*, and *nay* what is *nay*, a penetrating and devouring fire, and thereupon named a judge of mind and thought; and this is my proof this moment, and I could wish that you would allow it to serve you as test of your own self. If you try again to twist your words around, or cover them up, or say that it is an unmitigated lie, and there are three witnesses against you, then we shall let the matter rest with you to answer. I do not wish to encounter any further contradictions; *yea* must be *yea*.

May God's blessing rest upon you!

John Eckstein

The Count did exactly what Eckstein surmised he would do. He sent Eckstein the following impersonal and curt reply, denying virtually the whole charge:

Friend Eckstein may well feel assured that I neither said nor thought so. What I said to him I said into the face of the Schwenckfelder ministers. If he had not been talking so much all the time he might have heard a few things.

Zinzendorf

On the same day yet he sends the following post-script:

My Friend:

In fact, I gave a very short answer along with Neuser. I would be very sorry to get into correspondence with him (Eckstein) and others of his ilk. But I cannot let him off without a needful reminder, that however bitter one may feel in one's heart and however greedy one may be to catch up something that one can divulge whereto human imperfection affords one an occasion, one should still possess enough of natural strength as not to be always talking when some one else is talking; and should at least listen when one person says to the other one, four are five times, "you do not understand me." Not all of this took place during the short visit I paid him. He just kept on talking at random

¹⁴ Isaiah 58:6.

without listening to me. I knew quite well what I was saying; but because I saw that he did not know what he was hearing; I left and just for that reason, and not, as you thought, out of anger; but I fear the consequences.¹⁵

Eckstein gives an interesting account of what occasioned the foregoing letters. He repeats in part some of the points in his letter to the Count, but he also adds some very interesting facts. He says, "When the Count and David Nitschman visited me at my house on January 10, 1742, the Count asked me this, that, and the other about Spangenberg, and about the trip to Georgia and how I happened to go along; I answered him very briefly. Finally the conversation turned to Spangenberg, whereupon the Count said, Spangenberg was a Schwenckfelder; it was on account of them that he and Christopher Wiegner were sent to this country. Spangenberg should not have had any other work and should not have travelled hither and yon. He should have remained a Schwenckfelder and should have stood by them until they turned him out, then he should have shaken off the dust over them. I have a right over these people, and I will not let up, cost what it may. It was through their elders, the wolves, that they were torn out of my hands.

"I then said that according to my way of looking at this affair with the Schwenckfelders, everybody, even they themselves, should, as I repeatedly said, praise the mighty hand and power of God that He had brought them here under his (the Count's) protection. Whereat he assailed me severely, saying among other things that that was more than he had bargained for; that he told them just this very day they had escaped from or had been torn from him; that he could show them in writing that they were bound and obligated to him, and

much more to that effect. I pressed myself into the conversation again and said that since the Schwenckfelders are an old congregation and have conducted themselves as such in this country for several years, I could not see how any power could be placed over or piled upon them; and that since they were a congregation in their own right they could acknowledge no power over them except the power of God Almighty. Hereupon he flew into a rage and denied that they were a congregation, that he would execute his power and not yield, that he would beseech the Lord to spew them out; in fact he himself spewed several times. Because he had so much to say, I had to start with my remarks three times, and said that I thought where the spirit and love of Christ was, no right or a sole power could prevail, for we find it written in the Prophets, 'Let those go free whom you have in bondage unjustly.' As I said this he became still more enraged and remarked that even if I quoted a hundred Bible passages it would create only a war of words. Then he jumped up and out of the door. He went saying, 'God protect you.' Nitschman remained a little while longer like one dumb-founded, finally he extended his hand and also left."

By this time the Count von Zinzendorf became still more irresolute, irrational, and irritable, in consequence of which he committed some more imprudent acts, and made some more indiscreet remarks and wild threats; all of which are noticeable in the letter he now addressed to the Schwenckfelders.

To my erstwhile beloved Wards and other Friends named after Caspar Schwenckfeld
Dear Friends:

Christopher Wiegner told me today that I had spoken with people at his house with whom I had not intended to speak; that may be, for besides the old elder [Balthasar Hoffman ?] and the man who was the spokesman [Melchior Kriebel] I neither knew anyone nor meant to speak with anyone on account of my weak eyes,¹⁶ since I

¹⁵ Fresenius *Bewährte Nachrichten*, Vol. III, 256ff. "Every person who is the least acquainted with Ludwig von Zinzendorf knows that wherever he is and begins to speak, speaks with a spirited and eloquent tongue, and monopolizes the conversation; he hardly allows another person the opportunity to say a word; while John Eckstein, at whose house these incidents took place, is well known as a man of few words and of keen attention."

¹⁶ It would seem rather strange that he should all of a sudden complain of weak eyes; said affliction is not mentioned elsewhere. It might be interesting to compare his tactics on this occasion with similar ones in his treatment of Schoenfeld. (Fresenius *Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhusischen Sachen*, Vol. III, pp. 516-518.)

knew nothing of your present circumstances except: (1) that my affair with you and the displeasure caused me by your moving hither is not yet at an end; (2) That the accusations which your people have hurled at me are not yet settled, for some one told me lately that I owed you money whereof I and my agents are to have defrauded you;^a (3) the way you treated Spangenberg and to a certain extent Christopher Wiegner (but who now disclaims that he suffered any such treatment), is not and cannot be a matter of indifference to me;^b (4) The discussion we had on the day of Epiphany, January 6, over the Scriptures, hymns, the ordinances of Christ and the way of salvation has convinced me that things are still going on with you people as they have always been.

Consequently I have announced, not to your attending deputies alone, but in the name of all whom it may concern, how I intended to proceed; namely, that after two hundred years in addition to which several more years were spent with me, I finally, and for once and for all, set a time-limit of three months for your false teachers, your unconverted elders and for your blind leaders;^c if within that time someone who comprehends the cross of Christ take charge of you, become your teacher, convert some of you, introduce the Sacraments and thus make you capable of bearing the name of a church; I would then let you stand in the Lord, for you would then be a regular denomination. If, however, this previous and still existing confusion should continue, and no one according to your confession to me should become converted, and false doctrine should remain in vogue, and when in a sermon, divided into eight points^d the passion and death of Christ are disposed of in one measley point, the Sacraments virtually abolished, and when one inquires of you your fundamentals there is nothing left but the bare name of sect, the peculiar garb, and something of a hollow sound about the dead letter of the inner Word, and of the spirit and the like, then, rather than let you become scattered hither and yon as heretofore, and have you connect with other sects and become false separatists, and in a word, become entirely ruined, I would interest myself in you, and make a beginning, as long

as you are here, of visiting you specifically, of assembling you; I would seek to improve you, to get rid of the hirelings, and if they should oppose me, to tear the sheep out of their mouths, and wherever you or I may go, who knows where, if you continue thus I will persecute you as long as I shall live, your captive souls I will search out and by praying and weeping will eventually obtain them for the Savior. These were, in fact, just about the points and certainly the meaning of my talk.^e

I would wish to remind you that the time-limit is approaching and will end April 6, when you are once again invited to a conference. May it be that we get along amicably and kindly.

Since I in my earnest and possibly harsh remarks at the time, to which I still adhere, knew nothing of Father Hoffman's particular zeal and the many tears he shed over the hard lot of his people at the burial of an aged Schwenckfelder, in so far I regret it. I mention this circumstance with all reverence and fittingly praise it in him because of the love my Savior gave out of righteousness. I should like nothing better than that he may yet become convinced of the honesty of my purpose and become my brother and co-laborer among his people.

As for the rest, after expiration of the time stated I shall proceed honestly and boldly to the matter in hand. I shall not set a time either for the Lord or for the people when the latter are to be helped. I have learned to be patient and to await the time of the Lord. It is sufficient for me to bring the matter to rights again, whether or not I see what the outcome will be.^f

Herewith I commend you to the grace and care of the Savior.

Ludwig¹⁷

The person to answer this letter was Balthasar Hoffman, than whom no one was better qualified:

Honored Friend,

If, as appears, your notice in reference to the proposed conference and the invitation thereto is also intended for us, we thank you for the same. But in considering the object in view regarding us we think it will not be attained, for we shall not part with the knowledge and convictions we pos-

^a "This remark is of his own concoction; the Schwenckfelders deny the charge and are wholly unconcerned about it."

^b "They refused to be cast into Herrnhuter molds."

^c "And all the while these men were right there with him."

^d "At the burial of a Schwenckfelder one of their elders made the admonitory address; for the sake of clearness he divided his discourse into eight points, in only one of which he spoke of the suffering of Christ. This address was listened to by a Herrnhuter woman with deceitful ears."

^e It is said that he expressed himself a great deal more vehemently and angrily than what his words imply.

^f "It was an empty threat that these people should fear and at once prostrate themselves, for they did not come and paid no attention to his dictatorial counsel, but remained quietly away from him, and since that time he could not undertake anything further against them."

¹⁷ Fresenius Bewährte Nachrichten, etc., Vol. III, p. 239 ff.

sess, nor let anything go thereof. Consequently we cannot see any benefit by attending the conference. This will explain then that we will not appear there. In reference to the accusations lately brought against us we do not concern ourselves. The truth of the matter can be ascertained by following the information to its source. Whatever may be determined against us we commend the matter to the Triune God as well as ourselves, and shall await the outcome in the hope that God will be with us and grant us patience, charity, understanding and strength. As for the rest, it is our thought and wish to allow each one to take his stand and to act as it seems best to him and grant him the benefit of such a course. In this manner we have wished to express ourselves; as for the rest, we feel inclined to remain your well-wisher and friend.

Balthasar Hoffman
and Sundry other Friends.
Germantown, April 12, 1742

This letter was too much for Zinzendorf; he became still more irrational, and in an irritable mood penned another letter, not dated, addressed to Christopher Wiegner, Balthasar Hoffman, and to the Kriebel, Melchior, who was the spokesman at Wiegner's house.

While I hereby charge publicly before the all-seeing eye of the Lord as well as before every honorable man that you have committed the spiritual and temporal care of your people to me in writing, even if you dwell outside of my domain and particularly outside of Europe and indeed in naming Pennsylvania. But I do not wish to lay the writing before you, because you treat me with sophistical artifices and I (the appointee of Jesus as Reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion) being obliged to proceed apostolically desire that you give me the following written obligation under your name that you will, until after your death take the charge upon yourselves. In that case this paper shall serve as a strong obligation on my part that I will set aside my services as a reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion; unless it be that several souls among you implore me for it, whom I shall at all times accept as my children and care for them temporally and spiritually, be they your children, brothers, sisters, parents, or whoever they may be, if only it is Schwenckfeldian and everything in proper order.

Your erstwhile Brother, Co-laborer
and Guardian,
Ludwig Zinzendorf
(not dated)

The release of which he speaks in the letter is found on the reverse side of his

letter sheet; it was never signed by the Schwenckfelders:

We, the undersigned, release Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf in the sincerest and most affectionate manner before God and man of, and from, all temporal and spiritual care of the Schwenckfelders in America during the term of our lives.

This letter was also answered by Balthasar Hoffman and sundry others:

Out of respect for your person we have in sincerity replied to all demands heretofore made upon us, but as we find that our simple yet truthful declarations are construed as sophistry we are compelled hereafter absolutely to decline to notice each and every importunity that may yet be made, oral or written, until we are shown that written power of our submission. For it is not the accusation but the evidence that proves the case. The entrusted instruction from Christ against our religion we do not believe. We decline the demand; we have neither the bestowed nor the assumed power nor choice to treat with our people in the manner prescribed; it would appear neither proper nor formal, but rather foolish. By the help of God we shall remain with ours, thank Him for granting us liberty, place our trust in His providential care, and commit ourselves with all that may impend to Him. We are not worrying about the length of time that entrusted reformation is to be suspended. We merely wish to make it known that we cannot assume, much less assent to, what we are charged with. We fail to see why such a binding instrument (as is alleged) was not shown us ere this. As we have openly and honestly made known our intentions we have nothing more to do with the affair having commenced our journey publicly. These are our resolutions and principles.

Balthasar Hoffman
Melchior Kriebel, Sr.
David Seibt
Christoph Huebner
Caspar Kriebel
And sundry others of us.¹⁸

(not dated)

This is a masterpiece of a letter; it quieted the dissembling Zinzendorf, who may by now have become a wiser man; he must have felt, if not convinced by this time, that his expressed scheme to capture the Schwenckfelders was futile.

It took the Schwenckfelders sixteen years to shake off their would-be reformer, who taught that there were only two churches in the world, one of which

¹⁸ Fresenius Bewährte Nachrichten, etc., Vol. III, p. 248.

was the Roman Catholic, but which lost its power when Jansenism was introduced into it; the other was the Moravian; that the children of Moravian parents are not in need of regeneration because their parents were converted; that baptism by water was regeneration; that one should indeed pray to the Son, He is Judge, but not to the Father; and who claimed he was the appointee of Jesus Christ as the reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion.

The Count's threat to tear their children from them if they themselves did not become converted was the last threat of persecution. The Schwenckfelders were grateful to the Count von Zinzendorf at that time and ever afterwards for providing a place of refuge for them and for rescuing them from a precarious situation in Silesia. It was only in later years that they realized, and not without alarm, what the Count's real intentions and purposes were.

It is to the credit of the Schwenckfelders that they did not make much ado over these affairs between themselves and the Count von Zinzendorf, the Moravian Bishop. They took the indignities, which the Count tried to heap upon them, virtually uncomplainingly. Aside from Zinzendorf and Spangenberg there has never been any misunderstanding between them and the Moravians; they

have always tried to live with one another on the most friendly terms. And it is to the credit of the Moravians that they have at no time tried to extenuate among the Schwenckfelders the questionable activities of the two men just mentioned. Nor are they to be judged by, nor be held responsible for, these acts of yesteryear.

And no less thankful were the Schwenckfelders a quarter of a century later, 1769. Christopher Schultz completed his manuscript of the *Erläuterung* on February 18th of that year. On March 8th, the manuscript with instructions for printing and money to pay expenses were sent to Bethlehem, for it was learned through David Nitschman, Jr., Moravian Bishop, that there would be opportunity to send the manuscript to Germany with one of the Moravians for printing. This was a great privilege and accommodation. Schwenckfelder correspondence with relatives remaining in Silesia was transmitted also by the Moravians.

What has been presented in this issue of the SCHWENCKFELDIANA regarding the relation between the Schwenckfelders and the Moravians is a matter of history. May the cordial relations which have existed between them these many years continue in years to come.

NICHOLAUS LUDWIG, COUNT VON ZINZENDORF (1700-1760)

Of Noble Birth

This young Saxon nobleman was of noble descent on both sides of his family. If descent from ancient lineage and long-worn titles were ever of any value, then his rank as a nobleman was of unusual eminence, while his claims to distinction on the score of inherited rank were by no means small, for the illustrious family from which he sprung traces its ancestry as far back as the 11th century. At that time the family was ranked among the twelve great houses which constituted the chief support of the Austrian dynasty. The family originally belonged to Austria. At the time of the Reformation its members sided with the Austrian nobles who took up the Reformed faith. The pressure exerted upon them by the Imperial Court and by the Jesuits was so heavy and crushing that the Zinzendorfs became exiles from their native land. They fled across the border into Saxony and settled at Berthelsdorf in Upper Lusatia, about thirty miles from Dresden.

The young nobleman had about thirteen titles: Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf, and von Pottendorf; Lord of the Baronies of Biebersheim, Freydeck, Schoeneck; Thurnstein, and of the Vale of Wachovia; Lord of the Manor of Upper, Lower, and Middle Berthelsdorf; Hereditary Warder of the Chase to His Imperial Majesty, in the Duchy of Austria, etc. He was known as Count von Zinzendorf, but occasionally he signed himself Baron von Thurnstein, especially so when he came to America. In fact, soon after he was in this country he at one time in a public meeting renounced his titles. This unexpected act of his caused some speculation. Reichel, in his *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, quotes James Logan as saying that the Count had framed an instrument in Latin of resignation of all his honors. . . . Logan was to put it into English, but as he could not it was printed as it was. He invited Governor Thomas and all who understood Latin to meet at the Governor's house. Several went. After he had given each a

copy he read off the instrument, but after all he withdrew his papers and himself, saying he must first seek advice of some friends in Germany. This meeting took place on May 26, 1742; it was attended by some people of note, among them was Benjamin Franklin, Postmaster. He noticed that in this country people pay virtually no attention to empty titles; he was also embarrassed with his titles because of the religious work in which he was engaged among the less well-to-do in this country.

Birth and Childhood

Count von Zinzendorf was born in Dresden on May 26, 1700, and was baptized the same day. Spener, the well-known Pietist, came all the way from Berlin to be godfather at the baptism. His father, George Ludwig von Zinzendorf, was a premier at the Court of Saxony. He was esteemed for his good sense, high integrity, piety and devoutness. He was a member of the Lutheran Church in which faith the son was baptized. The father was married twice; the second wife was the mother of the Count. When the boy was only six months old, the father died, and in 1704 the mother married a Prussian officer and moved to Berlin; so she virtually had no part in the bringing up of the boy and in moulding his character. The boy was placed under the protection and care of his grandmother, the widow Henriette, Countess von Gersdorf, who lived at Groshennersdorf. She too was an accomplished woman, highly gifted in music and poetry, and of distinguished piety and acquirements, which, it would seem, were of a classical order and scope, for it is said that she conducted correspondence in Latin and was in frequent communication with such prominent men as Franke and Spener and others of that ilk. This grandmother was also no less a poetess, for she possessed the ready gift of rendering her Christian thought in German verse. She was also a member of the Lutheran

Church of the Augsburg Confession. Hence it ought not be difficult to trace the sources of Zinzendorf's piety, his gift of song, his love for music, and a highly poetic imagination. Fortunately, the boy was left under care of this capable woman until his tenth year.

His Piety

It would seem that just as the boy inherited his many titles to rank and nobility so he may also have inherited from his ancestors, immediate and former, his great piety and devoutness, and his unquestionable faith in his Savior. The piety and humbleness, the religious spirit, the unyielding faith and trust in God which fought through centuries of persecution without flinching culminated in the genius of the person of Zinzendorf, just as it took six generations of ministers to bring forth an Emerson.

The father was a devout and serious character; and the mother, though she had little to do in bringing up the child, was a woman of noble rank and singular worth; she was remarkable for seriousness of character and devoutness of spirit and gifted with brilliant talents. She lived to a great old age. His grandmother, whose accomplishments have already been noted, and the boy's Aunt Gersdorf and his tutor Edeling taught him to pray, and gave him such careful religious instruction that he knew the principal doctrines of Christianity by the time he was four years old.¹

So it is no small wonder that he was already noted in his infancy for his piety, for his tenderness of conscience, and his delight in prayer and the Word of God. Many incidents are related of his innocent days spent at Groshennersdorf which already illustrated the quality of his mind and gave an indication of his future character. It is related that when the army of Charles XII of Sweden, the "Madman of the North," invaded Saxony some of the soldiers intruded upon the private grounds of Hennersdorf Castle. It was just at the moment when the young nobleman was engaged, as was his wonted custom, in

holding communion with his Savior, and was in the fervent attitude of prayer. So struck were the soldiers with the scene of a child of only six years displaying such earnest devotion, that, disarmed of their purposes, they joined in with his devotional exercises.² It is also related how he in his boyhood days in Hennersdorf Castle wrote very tender missives to the Savior and then wafted them out of a window into the air.² So boundless and unquestionable was his faith in what he was doing that he felt fully assured and confident that these missives would reach their destination and would be read by the Savior.

School and Education

When he was ten years old his Uncle Zinzendorf sent him to the Royal School at Halle. Here he boarded with Franke, the Pietist and superintendent of the school. He was looked upon as a pupil possessing great abilities and foreshadowing great promises. His progress in learning was looked upon as phenomenal.

When he was sixteen he was sent to the University of Wittenberg to study Jurisprudence. Here Pietism had a bad odor, and Lutheran orthodoxy was dominant. The young Count acquired a strong desire to study theology; but he was strongly enjoined to study law, to apply himself to the acquisition of the accomplishments deemed proper to the rank he enjoyed. These commands of his uncle were rather unwelcome and a little galling, but he obeyed. When the college course was ended he set out on his "Wanderjahre." He visited Holland, among other places; he learned Dutch and English; French he had acquired before. He went to France where he resided in Paris for some time and received a flattering reception.

His travels did him a lot of good; but he was still anxious to enter the ministry. So when he became of age he pressed the matter more strongly and signified his desires and intentions to his many friends; but they all protested; in fact, his whole "household" did so, everyone whom he loved and respected.

¹ M. Felix Bovet—*The Banished Count, from the French*, by Rev. John Gill, London, 1865.

² James Henry—*Sketches of Moravian Life and Character*, Philadelphia 1859, pp. 61-62.

A Count of the German Empire turning parson! No such thing was ever heard of in Germany. Such a course would be an outrage on all proprieties. He must abandon the idea and make up his mind to settle in Dresden and accept office under the Saxon government as his forebears had done. This was another disappointment, but again he obeyed.

In Public Office

His rank entitled him to the occupancy of certain civil offices under the government; but all secular tasks, or employment, were so repugnant to him that it took him a long time after his return to Dresden before he could be prevailed upon to accept a seat in the public councils under the title of Aulic and Justicial Counsellor. It would seem as though he yielded to the importunities of his "household" and accepted the position with some feeling of mental reservation, for at the very same moment he was assuming this official dignity of state he made up his mind to take up the ministry as his life career.

He engaged assistants in his office work and began a system of religious instruction and of holding regular devotional meetings. So absorbed did he become in his religious work that when there was a clash between the claims of rank and official duty, and the obligations of an apostle of Christ, the former had to yield.

His Marriage and Bishopric

In 1732 he married Erdmuth Dorothea von Reuss, a lady of suitable rank and deeply in sympathy with his religious views. She was a noble lady possessing the qualities of mind and heart which fitted her for the work both were going to do.

Although Zinzendorf was much engaged in temporal affairs, he devoted all his leisure in serving his Master both in and out of the Church; but that he might be of greater and better service to that end he prepared himself for ordination, applied and was accepted in 1734, and entered as one of the ministry of the Moravian Church. In 1737, he was consecrated Bishop of the Church by Bishop David Ernst Jablousky and Bishop

David Nitschman. As an ecclesiastic he could now function as Bishop, Advocate, Ordinary, and Representative, with full power of the Church of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren adhering to the Augsburg Confession.³

Lord of the Manor of Berthelsdorf

Previous to his marriage, the Count had entered upon his duties as proprietor of the manor and estates of Berthelsdorf and was consequently proclaimed Lord of the manor and received the usual tributes of respect and homage from the vassals occupying the estates. Shortly after this event, about 1722, a company of Moravian Protestants, the descendants of the ancient *Unitas Fratrum*, made their way across the Austrian frontier; they were searching for an abiding place in Saxony in order to get away from the Hapsburgers and the Jesuits. Finally they reached Berthelsdorf where they were permitted to take refuge on the domain of the Lord of Berthelsdorf. At the head of this band of refugees was Christian David, a carpenter, who was a leading character in the building up of Herrnhut. They were granted a tract of land upon which they established themselves. Other refugees came hither: Quakers, Mennonites, Schwenckfelders and others. This was the beginning of Herrnhut, which took its name from an eminence, within the domain, which bore the name of *Hutberg*, six miles from the Bohemian frontier. By the end of five years Herrnhut was a town of thirty houses and three hundred inhabitants; two-thirds of these were refugees.

It was on this acquired estate called Berthelsdorf that Zinzendorf was preparing to take up his residence and establish one of several centers of Christian activity, which he had been planning in conjunction with some friends and pious associates. Three centers were to be modeled after the Pietistic societies and the institutions of Halle. To include the care of the Moravian refugees in these plans had not been thought of, neither had the idea of

³ Abraham Ritter—History of the Moravian Church in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 1857, p. 18.

helping to reconstruct the old evangelical church of that country occurred to him. So this chance interview with this carpenter from Moravia brought him in contact with what was to become his life-work.

The Displeasure of the Court

The further reception of refugees at Herrnhut from those sections of country where persecutions were becoming galling and the conditions insufferable involved serious questions behind which there loomed up evil forebodings. Drastic measures in the spirit of the old persecutions were being adopted to check this movement, this migration to Saxony. The Austrian government was displeased to see a haven of refuge at its very door where its oppressed subjects could maintain themselves in honorable independence without forfeiting their religious liberty. The government made its displeasure felt at the Court of Saxony. As a result, a royal commission was sent from Dresden to Herrnhut to investigate; its report was favorable. Consequently the "plant" had to be let alone, for seemingly no fault could be found with it. There were now only two means left to molest its continuance: to put hindrances in the way of the refugees and thus stop the flow of immigrants to it, and by harassing and by making thrusts against the person of Zinzendorf himself, who was finally banished from Saxony in 1736.⁴ He was never permitted to reside there until near the close of his life. Twenty of his best years were spent in exile from his native land.

His Banishment

On hearing of his banishment, a friend, or two, invited Zinzendorf to occupy Ronneberg Castle, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, to which he forthwith repaired. He was accompanied by his family, by Christian David, and several others. The whole group styled themselves the Pilgrim Congregation. The building was an ancient ruin, an old feudal structure, a forbidding old pile.

⁴ The banishment was in the main the result of a difference in doctrine and teaching.

The Count's retinue found the inhabitants a motley array of Jews, Separatists, and people of every strange creed, who lived as peddlers, mendicants and mechanics; the dusky recesses and vacant halls they used for their shelter.

But despite the cheerlessness of the old pile, and the repulsiveness of the inhabitants, and all discouragement, the Ronneberg was the place where Zinzendorf spent the first term of his banishment. The members of the group busied themselves by teaching the children who loitered around the premises. Eventually a small gathering or congregation was formed, out of which a larger community known as Marienborn grew up. Hither the Count repaired when he returned from his travels, notably so when he returned in an extremely shattered state of health from the voyage to the West Indies, due to the climate of the islands.

The Schwenckfelders at Herrnhut

It needs to be recalled that when the Schwenckfelders fled from Silesia in 1726, Zinzendorf afforded them shelter for eight years, from 1726-1734. The Jesuits, provoked because they could not win these people over to the Catholic faith, were now doubly incensed at Zinzendorf for affording them protection. All this took place while the Count was *persona non grata* at the Saxon Court. By April 4, 1733, an Imperial Edict was issued from Dresden, directing Zinzendorf to inform them that they would no longer be tolerated, and that they had to move within a year, 1734. All through the year 1733, they were at a loss, not knowing whither to migrate, but they had been thinking of America, especially of Pennsylvania. The Count was also alarmed and looked for an abiding place for the Moravians. He had his eye on Georgia, which colony had been established for the oppressed of all kinds. He had also ever since 1727 been harboring the thought of undertaking missionary work among the heathen. So he naturally looked upon Georgia as a vantage point from which to preach the Gospel to the Indians. It was proposed at one time that the Schwenckfelders and the Moravians migrate in a body to

Georgia; but because certain conditions could not, or at least were not, met, the former set sail for Pennsylvania and arrived at Philadelphia, September 22, 1734 (n.s.) while the first group of Moravians, destined for missionary work among the Indians, started for Georgia on November 4th of the same year under the superintendency of August Gottlieb Spangenberg.

Zinzendorf expressed his missionary zeal somewhere in 1741 in these words: "I am destined by the Lord to proclaim the message of the death and blood of Jesus." Reichel, in his *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, says: "Zinzendorf was of the opinion that the best field for unrestrained general activity for the Kingdom of God would be in Pennsylvania; for in a country and among a people where there were as yet no ecclesiastical organizations whatever there could not be hindrances such as he met elsewhere—hindrances founded upon and emanating from ecclesiastical usages and customs of long standing. Therefore, if anywhere on earth, his ideal of 'a church of God in the Spirit' could be realized, Pennsylvania, he thought, might be that country."

With the full intent of preaching the Gospel to the Indians and of working among the various religious groups in Pennsylvania, he set out for America after he had regained his health which was badly shattered when he returned from the West Indies in 1740.

In Pennsylvania

In 1741, he crossed the sea again and landed in New York on December 2, 1741. He was accompanied by his daughter Henriette Benigna Justina, a girl of sixteen years, by Rosina Nitschman, the wife of Bishop David Nitschman, by John Jacob Mueller, his secretary, and by three new missionaries. David Nitschman, Sr., uncle of the Bishop, and Anna, his daughter, had previously arrived in America.

After tarrying in New York for a few days, he left for Philadelphia, where he arrived with his retinue on December 10, 1741. His arrival in this country was eagerly awaited by people of various dispositions. The excitement and comment

over his arrival were rather greater in Philadelphia than in New York. Some people were anxious to find out what spiritual wonders this new apostle was likely to accomplish; some were simply curious to see and hear a nobleman of rank with at least a dozen titles and with a large fortune, a man who held a high position at a court in the old country, and yet who relinquished all so as to engage in religious work; while still others had a feeling that the spirit of oppression was coming into the land with the arrival of the Count. From this it would seem that his reputation and a report of what he was doing in the old country preceded his arrival here. Several years before this, a rumor went the rounds that a prominent person, named Zinzendorf, of Saxony, was creating a disturbance throughout the kingdom, that he travelled about the country to convert people and to set up special regulations and to organize people in groups, wherever he happened to be. One might think he already had a sort of "international" reputation.

Here in the city he was welcomed as a guest at the house of Stephen Benezet,⁵ a wealthy Huguenot merchant of Philadelphia; he was very much interested in Zinzendorf and his affairs. By the evening of December 18, 1741, Zinzendorf was in Germantown, where he lodged for the night. By December 19, 1741, he was in Skippack at Christopher Wiegner's place. Wiegner was a "quasi-Schwenckfelder," and lived on a large farm in Towamencin Township, Montgomery County (then Philadelphia County). On the evening before his departure, Zinzendorf had inquiries made of the German printer in Germantown whether he could shortly print a small collection of hymns for him. Immediately after his arrival here he prepared for publication a small collection of hymns, some old, some new. The

⁵ This was John Stephen Benezet, the father of Anthony Benezet, a noted philanthropist of the city. In 1715 the family fled from Holland to England and became attached to the Society of Friends in London. Between the latter and the Brethren there long existed very friendly relations. Three of Benezet's daughters were married to Moravians at Bethlehem.

collection was entitled: *Hirtenlieder von Bethlehem, enthaltent eine kleine Sammlung evangelischer Lieder*. The printer was Christopher Saur. This was the first meeting between Zinzendorf and this combative printer of Germantown.

The Unity Conferences

The next day he made his way to Henry Antes, wheelwright and farmer of Falkner Swamp. It was through Christopher Wiegner that these two men fell into each other's good graces. Here the decision was made to hold a series of conferences to which representatives of all religious groups, about thirteen in all, were to be invited, if not summoned. So Zinzendorf commissioned Antes to issue the noted circular letter which was sent to the representatives of the various groups, urging them to attend the said conferences to consider "the essential articles of faith, not with the intention of quarreling and wrangling with each other, but to treat each other in love, so that all judging and fault-finding might cease, etc." According to all accounts, Zinzendorf himself was the instigator and director of the whole project.⁶ There were thirty-six of these conferences, but the minutes of only seven are recorded.⁷

The conferences followed each other too closely; there was one each month from January to June inclusive, with a second one in January. They became tiresome. The movement met with decided opposition from the very beginning. Denominationalism held its head high from the very first and was violently opposed to the project, for each denomination held tenaciously to its own creed and fundamentals. One might ask what the essential articles of faith are, and who is to determine them and by whom judgment shall be expressed. Little was accomplished. It is a mooted question whether any of the points, or

topics, enumerated in the letter were ever amicably discussed. Most of the meetings were filled with rancor and dissension.⁸ The object of these conferences was the "Unification of the German sects throughout the Colonies." But instead of lessening the wrangling and quarreling, greater dissensions arose, just as many people had suspected. The unifying of these sects so as to form something like a Christian Spiritual Confederacy sounds very beautiful; but people looked askance at the project. They were afraid of losing all they had gained by years of suffering, privation and persecution. They resented any plan that would blot out their identity, and they be made the vassals of a feudalistic system erected upon Church and State.

Zinzendorf in Action

These conference-meetings also disclosed something else; they showed Zinzendorf in action, probably more so than is evidenced in anything else in which he took part. One side of his character displayed here is his fondness and eagerness to rule and control. Conrad Weiser remarks that the Count loved to rule, and too much by force. This trait in him would account for his dictatorial sway, his love of power, and his arbitrary rulings. Already during the first conference, and the second, it became evident that he was exercising his assumed prerogative as author, proposer, arbitrator, and judge; everything was ordered and conducted according to his intent, purpose, and impulse. Weiser remarks further: "He acts as if he could dispatch a hundred royal messengers in a day, nay, even in an hour. His ideas are swift and usually good, and he always confirms them by the casting of lots. And these ideas the congregation has to swallow. To be obedient to his arbitrary reasoning and conclusions means to his people that they no longer have a will of their own. For that reason can the Count chase them into every corner of the world and make them risk their lives and bodies, nay even lose them. When you are ordered to go you

⁶ Johann Philip Fresenius — *Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen*, 1748, Vol. III, pp. 305-313.

⁷ Rev. Wm. J. Hinkle—An authority on the history of the Reformed Church in Germantown. Four of the conferences were held in Germantown, one in Oley, one in Falkner Swamp, and one "down town." The first conference was called for January 1, 1742 (o.s.) in Germantown.

⁸ The fifth conference, held in Germantown, April 18-20th, was especially "fiery."

go; no amount of reasoning will help you; otherwise you will be an enemy of the Lord and will finally be put under the ban and eventually be shown the door. He does not consider himself bound by any rules or principles, human or divine, to gain his objective. Accordingly, he maintains that whatever is of service to the congregation, or community, is all right, even if it is suffused with untruths. He assigns teachers, missionaries, and even apostles in the twinkling of an eye; nor does he hesitate the least to promise that which he cannot give or which is beyond reason to give, e.g., appointments to a governor's or ruler's position, appointments to knightly orders, or to a judgeship, etc. One might think that if he did a little reasoning he would see that he could catch only fools with such promises."⁹ Illustrations of such actions can easily be found in the reports of these conferences.

In Bethlehem

In his swing around the circle by way of Skippack, Falkner Swamp, etc., he was in Bethlehem by Christmas Eve and celebrated the Lord's Supper with his people. This was his first visit to this settlement which up to this time had no "official" name. The place was simply known as the "Forks," an indefinite term for the section of country lying within the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers, and running back as far as the Blue Mountains. "While celebrating the vigil of Christmas-eve . . . as we were closing the services . . . the Count led the way into the stable that adjoined our dwelling and commenced singing the hymn opening with these words, *Nicht Jerusalem, sondern Bethlehem, aus dir kommet was mir frommet*, and from this touching incident the settlement received the name of Bethlehem."¹⁰

In Ephrata

On Christmas day he left for Oley, where he assured his hearers was to be

⁹ Fresenius — *Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen*, 1748, Vol. III, pp. 869-872.

¹⁰ Martin Mack's Autobiography, quoted in Reichel's *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, Vol. I, p. 175.

established the Savior's first congregation. From Oley he went to Ephrata to see the establishment of the Seventh-Day Adventists, so-called. He made mention of a union between them and other Anabaptists and the remaining friends in the country. But he is said to have remained only a few hours and without disclosing himself. He went to wholly strange people; he did not want to be with friends. Evidently he did not wish people to know that he was around. The troop left yet that night, much to their discomfort and that of the horses which they spared not; they must have driven like Jehu of old, for many people took offence at the whole performance. His daughter met him "down town" on his return, December 30, 1741.

His First Appearance in an American Pulpit

The following Sunday, December 31st, he preached for the first time in the German Reformed Church in Germantown. This was also his first appearance in an American pulpit. This church is now the Market Square Presbyterian Church. Zinzendorf frequently preached in it; in fact, always when he preached in Germantown; it was the only church in the town with which he had any connections. All of Zinzendorf's discourses delivered in this country were written down by his amanuensis¹¹ while he was delivering them, or as he dictated them. They were published abroad with the title: *Reden von dem Herrn der unsere Seligkeit ist, und über die Materie von seiner Marter in Nord-Amerika gehalten*. Another edition has the title: *Eine Sammlung öffentlicher Reden, 1742 in Canada gehalten*.¹² Both were published in 1744.

¹¹ John Jacob Mueller was the Count's amanuensis (secretary) during his stay in America. He was by profession a portrait painter from Nuremberg; he returned to Europe with the Count in whose family he remained until 1760, the year of the Count's death.

¹² Conrad Weiser is authority for saying that the Count was never in Canada, only in the Mohawk Valley, N. Y. But it should be noted that in those days the term had a wider application; it was frequently used by Europeans of that day to designate the Northern British Colonies, while the name *Florida* was occasionally applied to the Southern Colonies.

They are, in some respects, considered among the more valuable of his printed sermons, as specimens of his preaching at its best in matter and form, adapted to a general audience and to the conditions of the time.¹³

There seems to be an unhappy tendency noticeable in his sermons and hymns to look upon the Son of God as the proper object of trust and prayer, and the source of power, grace and mercy to the exclusion of the Father. There is a disproportionate number of hymns and prayers addressed directly and exclusively to Christ.¹⁴ He is said to have observed that one should indeed pray to the Son, He is Judge, but not to the Father. In fact, one of his home-made preachers taught that it was not necessary to pray to God, to do so was praying into the air! One needs to pray only to Jesus Christ,¹⁵ His Son; He is Jehovah. It is said this man even accused those who believe in a Triune God of believing in three Gods.¹⁶ It would seem that the one manifestation of the Trinity which was uppermost in Zinzendorf's mind was Jesus, the Savior, *der Heiland*, which appellation he uses time and again, as if there were no divine order like the Trinity; it is always the Saviour; the Father and the Holy Spirit are mentioned much less frequently.

Leaves for New York

Zinzendorf preached his last sermon in Germantown in the Reformed Church on June 17, 1742, in the same place where he preached his first sermon in America. He had intended to preach here again in December but he went to Conastoga instead. He preached his last sermon in America on December 31, 1742, in the newly-erected Moravian Church in Philadelphia. To avoid the pain of taking leave of so many people, he left the church before the conclusion of the services and unnoticed by the crowd. He then drove off in a coach, in waiting for

him, for Frankford on the Delaware, which place he reached the same night and then pursued his way to New York.

The Count von Zinzendorf's coming to America has often been viewed with misgivings. Here are the views of several well-known men whose word needs to be respected. Conrad Weiser says that one of the Ephrata Brethren remarked to him that the Count had a big bag with him into which he was going to poke all the sects, even the Separatists, and rule all alone. Oscar Seidenstecher, at one time a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, remarked that Zinzendorf sought to bring them all under one hat, i.e., his own hat. Christopher Saur, one of his mortal enemies, said it was undoubtedly his purpose to form one party, or sect, and that was his own. An Anabaptist, writing from Germantown, said: "Zinzendorf had great things in mind and thought he would dominate everything; he would lord it over Separatists, Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Mennonites, Schwenckfelders, Quakers, Reformed, Lutherans, etc. But he came too late and did not succeed; he accomplished little. He secured a few Baptists and Separatists and a few Reformed but most from the Lutherans. He went to school here in Pennsylvania; he found people here who were his match; nothing was taken for granted; he received a good pummeling."¹⁷

His Remaining Days in Europe

Zinzendorf reached New York January 13th, and set sail for Europe January 20, 1743. He was accompanied by his daughter Benigna, by Anna Nitschman, and by Rosina Nitschman, the wife of Bishop David Nitschman, and sundry others. They arrived at Dover, England, February 17, 1743. After visiting the Moravian establishments at Yorkshire and at Broadoaks, he proceeded to London, where he spent some time; he preached here almost every day; his sermons were taken down, translated into English, and published. It was also in London that he preached in French the first time.¹⁸

¹³ Joseph Mortimer Levering—A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1903, p. 73.

¹⁴ Rev. Professor Binney—Sketch of Zinzendorf, Edinburgh, 1833.

¹⁵ Bewährte Nachrichten, Vol. III, 1748, p. 186; Vol. II, p. 450, and Vol. I, p. 157.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bewährte Nachrichten, Vol. III, 1748, p. 785 ff.

¹⁸ M. Felix Bovet—The Banished Count, London, 1865.

On his return to Herrnhut he found the whole establishment in a state of convulsion. The years 1744-1750 were unfortunate ones. The year 1750 found the society in severe financial difficulties. The death of his wife in 1756 added to his misfortune. They had twelve children, six boys and six girls. When the mother died only three (daughters) of the twelve children survived her. The next year, 1757, he married Anna Nitschman who seemingly was his "handmaid" while he was in America, and who he said on a former occasion was his sister as they had one father and one mother.

With his newly wedded wife and a few relatives he once more toured Switzerland and returned in 1758. He made a final tour of Holland in 1759. But his life was wanning. He died May 9, 1760, and his wife twelve days later.

Often Indiscreet and Irrational

That the man was often irrational and indiscreet in word and deed is admitted even by his friends. But a feeling of charity would ascribe such thought and deeds to hasty, impulsive actions and a strange emotionalism rather than to impugn the man's motives. Only one of such acts, and harmless in itself, will be recounted. In his letters he occasionally called himself Ludwig Nitschman, claiming he was the adopted son of the elder Nitschman; that Anna Nitschman, the former's daughter, was his sister; that they had one father and one mother; that she often had to be with him for she was his treasurer and housekeeper and that he took council with her in all things. It is noticeable that she always travelled with him while he was here and left with him for Europe. He himself wrote, "Not only did her brother bequeath her to me when he went to prison and won the martyr's crown in 1728, but her father known as Nitschman, the carpenter, adopted me as his son as a matter of convenience when I became Moravian Bishop."¹⁹ While he lived in Germantown, the two frequently went out for a walk in the evening, which performance

was rather offensive to many people. It is worthy of note that when the Count's wife died in 1756, he married this woman the next year. How he molested and harassed the Schwenckfelders, claiming he was the appointee of Christ as the Reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion and the vain threats he made at them is all found in another paper in this issue. He likewise threatened the Mennonites that if they did not send delegates to his conferences he would scatter them to the four corners of the winds. In his letter of November 16, 1742, Christopher Saur says that the Count said to a Mennonite preacher that if he did not come and join his group (Moravians) he would have to see before a year was past that one-half of the Mennonite congregation (numbering here some 6,000) would become Moravians. As far as anyone knows not a one had gone over to the Moravians in the ten and one-half months that he was here. Out of all the congregations of the Baptists, only two, who were sick from this wrangling over matters of doctrine, united with the Moravians.

Gifted in Many Ways

Zinzendorf was a poet, theologian, pastor, and statesman. He was a genius, and possibly somewhat precocious. It might not be amiss to recall the old saying that it is only a step from genius to insanity. His mind was of that eager, imaginative cast which often gives birth to brilliant ideas and schemes. If the possessor of such a faculty of mind, and he had that faculty, has the practical wisdom to work out those ideas and schemes, well and good; but if not, then the result may be vastly different.

In the Royal School at Halle he was regarded as a youth with great abilities and of great promises. He made such rapid progress in his studies that he could compose an oration in Greek when he was sixteen and speak extemporaneously in Latin on a given subject.²⁰ Others, however, say that he had a powerful will and an ardent disposition

¹⁹ These are his own words as recorded in the *Pensilvanischen Nachrichten*, 1742, p. 10.

²⁰ James Henry — *Sketches of Moravian Life and Character*, Philadelphia, 1859, pp. 61-62.

which was kept in check only by his precocious thoughtfulness, and that his progress in his studies was slow because his lively imagination was often a hindrance to his memory,²¹ and possibly to his sound reasoning.

He was a man of many languages; Latin, German, and French were alike to him. "His style and diction were peculiarly his own." Because he used so many words and particularly phrases from English, Latin, and French, his ordinary German is almost corrupt—much to the vexation of anyone who tries to translate some of his literary productions. Whenever he writes pure German it is said he writes admirably.²² And yet, despite these manifest scholarly qualities, he left no writings that are of any particular consequence or importance. His sermons were published, as already stated, but they are found where printed sermons are usually found—among the unread and forgotten books. However, two of his literary productions may be worthy of note: "Introduction to Spiritual Direction" (An outline of Pastoral Theology) and a "Letter to Free-thinkers."

A Good Organizer

If any of his various gifts appeared more prominent than others, it was the power of organization and of government. He did organize several worthy projects for which he deserves considerable credit. He did a very commendable thing in Germantown when he directed his efforts vigorously toward education. The account is rather long and deserves a treatise by itself. His effort at establishing schools for the education of the children in the Province was among the first. The task was an arduous one and entailed considerable labor, disappointment, and expense. It was difficult to get people interested and to get them together to discuss the matter because of indifference, lack of time, poor means of travel, the suspicion cast upon the Moravians, misrepresentation of motives,

and the fear of proselyting. After several attempts and failures, a school was begun on May 4, 1742, in Germantown, with twenty-five girls. By June, 1743, this school was transferred to Bethlehem and became the famous Moravian Female Seminary. A few years later, the people of the town petitioned their friends in Bethlehem to have another school established here in Germantown. Their request was granted and a school opened September 26, 1746. This, then, was the beginning of the school work of the Moravian Church in America.

It seems that Zinzendorf's one thought, one desire, was to extend the knowledge of the Gospel. This ever-fresh and vigorous purpose gave unity to his life and character. One of his endeavors along this line was to do missionary work among the Indians. Though the idea of doing missionary work among them may not have been wholly original with him, still the conversion of the heathen was always uppermost in his mind. He made at least three journeys to the Indians. The first of these Christian embassies was to the Delawares not so very far from Nazareth; another was to the Mohicans at Shekomeko on the boundaries of New York and Connecticut. It was among this tribe that the Indian missionary Christian Rauch labored even before Zinzendorf came to this country. All these travels among the Indians were fraught with danger, but the one to the Shawnees along the Susquehanna was the most dangerous. This was a savage and treacherous tribe. The troop spent twenty days in this settlement. Conrad Weiser, Justice of the Peace and member of the Assembly and interpreter to the Indians, always accompanied Zinzendorf on these trips. On this occasion, Weiser was obliged to be away for a very short time on official business. In the meanwhile something went wrong, so that the Indians became suspicious of Zinzendorf and his group. Fortunately, Weiser came back just in time to prevent a general massacre. Had it not been for Weiser the group would never have escaped alive from that region. Conrad Weiser has left an interesting account both of this trip and the oth-

²¹ M. Felix Bovet—*The Banished Count, from the French by Rev. John Gill, London, 1865.*

²² Abraham Ritter—*History of the Moravian Church in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 1857, pp. 30-31.*

ers.²³ There is some discrepancy between his report and that of Martin Mack's, and probably not altogether to the credit of the Count.²⁴ After the Count's return from the Indian country in November, 1742, a plan of operations in the mission among the North American Indians was worked out. These mission centers were Bethlehem, Otstonwakin, Shekomeko, Wayomik (Wyoming), and New England.²⁵

A third noticeable thing he did while in this country was the organization of the Moravian Church in America. Though he was not the originator of the Moravian denomination, for this religious group was in existence a hundred years before he was born, nevertheless he organized this church so that it has been a denomination in its own right ever since.

Hymnologist

Zinzendorf had a poetic mind and a fertile imagination, and yet, even though he applied these talents to spiritual themes, he did not become a sacred poet or hymn-writer of a high order. He wrote his first hymn at Halle in 1712 (and he was then only twelve years old) and the last one at Herrnhut in 1760. Between these dates he wrote more than two thousand hymns! Incredible as this seems, it was, nevertheless, possible for him to do this, for he worked so fast and his fertile imagination was so alert and active and his store of poetic phraseology was so rich that he could compose hymns with great speed and facility; in fact so much so that he frequently produced verses during church services. He would extemporize hymns in the pulpit and give them out to be sung verse by verse as they were composed. It might have been better if he had spent more time and energy on correcting, revising, and condensing what he wrote. Many of his hymns sank into oblivion almost as soon as they were composed.²⁶ He himself published an edition of his poems:

Teutsche Gedichte, 1745 (?), but it contains only one hundred and twenty-eight hymns. This small number might indicate that the author himself realized that many of the hymns he had already written were merely ephemeral effusions born only to die. Probably the hymn beginning "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness" is his best. He wrote part of it on his voyage from the West Indies to Dover, England.

The keynote of his hymns, and, in fact, of his whole religious character, was a deep and earnest personal devotion to, and fellowship with, his crucified Savior. It might be difficult to find another character in history who felt himself so near to, and so familiar with, the Lord, so close to Him that he could commune with Him at his own pleasure. Zinzendorf actually felt this intimacy with his Savior; it was not some false pretense taken up for show; he meant it. Incidents of such thought and action can be readily found throughout his career. Mention has already been made of the letters which he wrote, while still a small child, to the Savior; how he tried to impress the Schwenckfelders that he was appointed by Jesus Christ to reform their religion. In a meeting one time while speaking of the Day of Judgment, he said he knew for a certainty that he would not be called to judgment, for by faith he had broken through death into life, but he would be present on that great occasion and embrace many souls whom he knew here and help them through. And there were people who, it would seem, believed he had this blessed privilege, for Pastor Pyrlaeus, who was bandied about between Zinzendorf and the Lutherans in Philadelphia, told a friend that Zinzendorf had indeed such favors from the Lord and stood so confidently in His good graces, that he could speak with Him whenever he wanted to.

This mental twist, this mental quirk, is shown even in his worst pieces; probably it is the very thing which makes them the worst. This trust of his and his misdirected fervor are often the cause of his objectionable familiarity with sacred things both in thought and in expression. Many of his best hymns are

²³ *Bewährte Nachrichten*, Vol. III, p. 854 ff.

²⁴ William C. Reichel—*Memorials of the Moravian Church*, Philadelphia, 1870, Vol. I, pp. 101-110.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Rev. Professor Binney—*Sketch of Zinzendorf*, Edinburgh, 1883.

apt to err in some way, if they are reverent and in good taste they are likely to be lacking in concentration and become diffuse. This diffusiveness is the result, in the main, of Zinzendorf's harping too much on one theme: the familiarity with his Savior. The range of this theme gave him little scope. Some of his hymns are worthy of note, for they are distinguished for their lyric grace, self-consecration, and artless simplicity. It is not the lyric grace, the lilt, but the thought, the expression which is so often at fault. Of his thousands of hymns the usual hymnal contains two or three. "The modern practice of making so much use of hymn-singing in conducting evangelistic and other religious meetings is due to Zinzendorf, but he carried the practice almost to the limit of propriety, if not to objectionableness. It would seem that music has always been a feature of Moravian church worship, and as such the trait has extended down through the years."²⁷

An Indefatigable Worker

Count von Zinzendorf did a prodigious amount of work while in America; and this is also the more remarkable because he was in this country only one year. He was a most industrious man; he was never idle, neither by day nor by night; he was constantly employed usefully eighteen out of twenty-four hours and even more. He slept only a few hours, taking barely time to eat and sleep. He was most indefatigable in his labors and readily suffered many discomforts. He was always sharp and exacting with himself, but inclined to be indulgent with others. No expenses were incurred on his person, nor were any people employed on his person; the little help that was needed was furnished by persons employed in other matters and around other people. To write and preach as much as he did and make so many journeys, to erect so many schools and establish so many congregations and set them in operation and keep them active and all this in one year's time, required an almost incredible amount of energy,

physical resources and industry without ceasing. The amount of work he did, the amount of energy he expended and the physical discomforts to which he exposed himself would have wrecked the constitution of many a man. And this is the more remarkable when one recalls that he was of delicate health until he was twenty years old.

A Leading Trait in His Character

Immoderation was, according to all indications, the leading trait in the Count's character. He pursued everything to its utmost ends. With him a possibility grew into a probability and quickly into a certainty. People who act in this manner would like to believe a thing as true, or not true; they turn the matter over in their mind time and again until they finally come to believe it. With such people the wish is very often the father to the thought. It was upon this process of thinking that he acted. His fertile imagination called up fancies, often dark and almost uncanny and uncouth, though very probably in harmony with his genius, which worked upon his mind with unusual force, called up all his energies and directed them to the purpose he had in mind and the project he was planning.

He was swayed by a strange emotionalism, for he was ruled more by his heart than by his head. His mind, it seems, was in a constant state of action. He decided everything on the spur of the moment, and gave expression to every thought, vague, subtle and eccentric, which occurred to him. If he became hot-tempered, he also soon cooled off. He harbored no hate in his heart, and was easily reconciled.

His anger and fiery spirit often betrayed him and ran away with his better judgment and his self-restraint. He had even to admit that he could have gotten away with his high temper in Europe, but this sort of thing did not work in Pennsylvania. A Baptist brother reproached him at one time and told him how he had provoked the people at conferences with his fiery spirit and lack²⁸ of self-control.

²⁷ John Julian—*A Dictionary of Hymnology*, New York, 1892.

²⁸ *Bewährte Nachrichten*, Vol. III, p. 785 ff.

**America May Have Misunderstood
Zinzendorf**

The Count had many admirable qualities, but unfortunately, it does not seem as if he always displayed them to his best advantage, at least not while he was in America. It is not improbable that he was in many ways misunderstood, notably so in his phraseology and demeanor, and consequently misconstructions were placed upon them. He received little sympathy for his pains in trying to transplant *Herrnhutischen* principles and customs to America, a new country and composed of such incongruous elements. Neither did he gain many admirers in trying to transfer the language and thought, which still obtained in the old country, to a people beginning to feel its spurs and living amid associations vastly different from those in the old country. These people were beginning to formulate their own ideas about a "new world order." His originality of thought and manner, often crude, and of expression equally as often uncouth and indelicate, did not win many friends for him, but rather offended many people. To verify these statements one needs only to note the speeches and expressions he used in some of his sermons and ordinary conversation while in America; they may have "passed muster" in the old country but not here.²⁹

Zinzendorf Misunderstood America

It is also equally true that Zinzendorf misunderstood America. He did not realize that with the beginning of the eighteenth century there dawned here in America a *novus ordo seclorum*—a new order of the ages—the like of which is found nowhere in the annals of mankind. The thoughts and manners of America were no longer the thoughts and manners of Europe of his day. America realized, even if Zinzendorf did not, that

New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of Truth.

²⁹ Bewährte Nachrichten, Vol. I, p. 616; Vol. III, pp. 143, 145, 178.

The religious groups whom he contacted, and often without civility and tact, had been here a score of years before he arrived. They had even then already begun to get a taste of the "four freedoms"; and, like the young lion at his first taste of blood, they found they liked the taste; and again, like the cub, they held tenaciously to their prey and became defiant to have the privileges and liberties they had won after years of suffering and persecution to be taken from them. Many of them forsook all they had; they followed a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night for years and finally in dangerous passages crossed thousands of miles of ocean waters to a land where they felt they would be assured religious freedom and the opportunity to work out their own salvation only to find a young would-be reformer following in the wake of their passage ready to filch from them what they had won through years of persecution and to foist a feudalistic system on Church and State, making them the vassals. That sort of thing may do in monarchical countries where people are made to submit to the endless, and frequently senseless, rules of conventionality, order and law. Such ideas were now foreign to anyone living in America.

Count von Zinzendorf's blind enthusiasm and his zeal for the cause to which he devoted his whole life led him astray and caused him to fall almost backwards in his efforts to convert everybody, Heathen, Indian, and Negro included. It was not necessary for him to be so greatly concerned about the Christian nurture and spiritual guidance and the religious instruction of these German immigrants. All they wanted was to be left alone to work out their own salvation. There were men among them who were Zinzendorf's equal in every respect, spiritually and intellectually, and they were not university trained men either.³⁰ They did the best they could, and he could not have done any better; the main difference is that they did not make so much noise and ado about it. They were resolute men, stal-

³⁰ SCHWENCKFELDIANA, Vol. I, No. 2, 1941.

wart old iconoclasts who were not convinced that all virtue lay with the past.

There were pastors among them who travelled many weary miles to administer to the spiritual need of their people and offer them some religious instruction. The austere attitude and exactness and rigidity in religious matters inherent in Moravian methods of discipline did not work out in America where people were widely scattered and had a desperate struggle to eke out a living in the American wilderness. The pressure of their daily tasks so as to procure the necessities of life prevented them from devoting as much time to daily devotions as some are inclined to think they should have spent. They could not have love-feasts ever so often. And then for Zinzendorf to endeavor to convert some of these people was most preposterous—convert them to what? To the Moravian faith, forsooth?

His Personality

Until he was twenty, Zinzendorf had a delicate constitution and manifested little of the physical strength he possessed in later years. In personal appearance he was dignified and commanded respect. He seems to have cast a sort of magnetic charm over people, for when he spoke men kept silent, and he was a fluent, and also incessant, talker. And equally readily did people yield to his injunctions. Perhaps it would have been well for him if people had yielded less obedience, probably better for both. In the details of his attire he was rather indifferent and unconcerned. His wants

were few; his wardrobe was scanty; he rarely required attendants. It could never be imputed to him that he was selfish for he spent next to nothing on himself. Every estate, or legacy, that ever came to him, or to his family, or to the next of kin, was always devoted and used for the service and benefit of the community. All his income, all that was his own, he gave away freely. Giving away so freely of his means often involved him in difficulty and financial embarrassment; but he always extricated himself, for he had faith that "God will see it paid."

Zinzendorf's best friends admit that he was irrational, eccentric, and often immoderate in speech and thought, but it was all natural in him and not assumed; it was more likely the fault of genius, an unfortunate mental or psychic force, twist or quirk which did not always enable him to act within the bounds in which a strictly normal person usually acts. To that extent he was very likely sincere, and not necessarily hypocritical. "I do not trust myself," says Conrad Weiser, "to disentangle his affairs, the good apart and the bad apart; it is certain that both are mixed up in him. I do not believe, furthermore, that he can extricate himself from his complicated existence without the strong hand of God, however much he would like to, for his whole life lies in it."³¹ He was simply unpredictable, and, at least while he was in America, some sort of phenomenon of his day.

³¹ Bewährte Nachrichten, Vol. III, pp. 871-872.

AUGUSTUS GOTTLIEB SPANGENBERG (1704-1792)

Like Zinzendorf, Spangenberg exercised a remarkable influence upon the formation and extension of the Moravian Church, the Church of the Brethren. Next to Zinzendorf, no one stood higher in the councils of the Church than he. Probably his influence was as weighty and as wholesome as that of Zinzendorf for he was not moved by a strange emotionalism; he could keep his feet on the ground and see the practicable side of the matter more soundly and less passionately than his superior could.

Birth and Early Youth

Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg was born in Klettenberg, Saxony, July 15, 1704. He was the youngest of the four sons of Rev. George Spangenberg, the Lutheran minister at Klettenberg, Principality of Hohenstein, Prussia. He was a faithful witness of the truth, very devout and filled with religious zeal. He often called his four sons into his room and falling upon his knees he would commend them to the Lord with copious tears. His mother, too, was a pious follower of the Lord; she was very anxiously concerned about the salvation of her soul. To the sorrow and to the great misfortune of the boys the mother died when Augustus was only one year old. So the four motherless boys were left to the care of the father, who was very solicitous about their education and upbringing, and he was equally anxious to make them acquainted with their Savior. But their cup of sorrow was not yet full; very likely the death of the father filled it; he died when Augustus was only ten years old and left four orphan boys.

Schooling and Education

After the father's death, Augustus entered the grammar school at Ilfeld, where he completed his preliminary studies. Once more sore affliction smote these boys heavily when they lost all their earthly possessions in a great fire. He said in later years that he perceived now that these afflictions worked together for good, and that this poverty

and want they were suffering were a great training school for the inner man. Of his brothers nothing is known. It would seem that in his fifteenth year the spirit of the Lord was his teacher and worked in his heart with divine power.

After he had finished at Ilfeld, he was admitted to the University of Jena in 1722; he graduated from there in 1726. Like Zinzendorf, his firm resolve was to study law, or jurisprudence, as the European institutions like to call the subject. Dr. Buddeus of the University soon had his attention drawn to the young Spangenberg, whose superior natural abilities and honest seeking after truth could not long escape being noticed. Dr. Buddeus took the orphan boy into his own family like an adopted son.¹

Resolves on His Life-Work

One day, while attending a lecture by Dr. Buddeus, he heard him expound Acts 26:29, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all who hear me this day, might become as I am, except these bonds." In his exposition the lecturer, in speaking of the "bonds" of St. Paul, remarked: "Whoever wishes to study theology and is not ready to hear reproach for Christ's sake is not qualified for the sacred office of a minister of Jesus." Spangenberg was deeply moved and worried; he went to his room and fell upon his knees and wrestled with his God as Jacob did with the angel, and then and there resolved to study theology and serve his Master. He felt himself derelict in his duty to his Master if he were unwilling to endure reproaches for His sake. Like Zinzendorf, he had a feeling that the Lord allowed him to enter into a childlike and confidential intercourse with Himself; and he always thought that God's protecting hand saved him from being drawn into the vortex of insubordination which was rampant at the institution. He studied

¹ Life of Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, from the German of Karl F. Ledderhose, London, 1855.

diligently every branch of theology and acquired an uncommon fund of sound and useful knowledge.

Professional Career

It happened that Count von Zinzendorf passed through Jena in November, 1727, while Spangenberg was still there. The Count had an interview with Dr. Buddeus and with some of the students among whom was Spangenberg. The Count took occasion to describe Herrnhut to them, now entering upon its fifth year. Spangenberg became strongly attached to the Count whose manner and subject and the picture he drew of the new colony somehow aroused the interest of young Spangenberg. This was the extent of his acquaintance with the Count for the immediate present. The next year a delegation on its way from Herrnhut to England passed through Jena, and incidently renewed the acquaintance with Dr. Buddeus and the students. Spangenberg gave them a hearty welcome. The students were evidently getting interested in the new venture at Herrnhut, for considerable correspondence, and active at that, began with the Count and with Herrnhut; and in this Spangenberg himself played a large part. He became so enthusiastic and so wrapped up in the new venture that he prevailed upon Zinzendorf to repeat his visit to Jena, assuring him that more than a hundred students were in sympathetic accord with him and his people.

So Zinzendorf, accompanied by several Brethren, visited Jena a second time in July, 1728, and remained six weeks. By 1730, Spangenberg and Godfrey Clemens visited Herrnhut; they were greatly impressed. The incidental meeting between Spangenberg and Zinzendorf in 1727 decided the former's career, just as that between Christian David and Zinzendorf a little while before decided the life-work of the latter. The Count returned again in 1729 and strengthened the little band of believers. Spangenberg was elated and in good spirits, but he was unwittingly "riding for a fall."

As Spangenberg had also taken his

M.A. degree at Jena, he could deliver lectures there. This scholarly distinction gave him a little public recognition and led to his appointment as Professor of Divinity at University of Halle; but he declined the appointment. The faculty, however, did not lose sight of him but repeated its endeavor to secure his services; so they appointed him assistant Professor of Theology and Superintendent of the Orphan House and also awarded him a fellowship at the university at the same time. He began work in 1732.²

Trouble Brewing

He soon noticed, however, that the teachers at Halle had no friendly feeling toward Zinzendorf and toward the people at Herrnhut. He was cordially received by Dr. Franke, head of the Theological Faculty, and by some others. But their regard soon began to wane and to be replaced by distrust and jealousy when they noticed his continued and increasing attachment to Zinzendorf and the Brethren. Storm clouds were rising because of the difference of the views on matters of doctrine held by these Pietists and by Spangenberg himself respectively. His private observance of the Holy Communion, his intimate connection with Zinzendorf and all he stood for, soon brought upon him the disapproval and the censure of the Theological Faculty of Halle; his doctrinal views and his whole walk and all his talk were contrary to the views held by them.

In January, 1733, Spangenberg very indiscreetly entertained three Moravian Brethren who were going as missionaries to Greenland, and toward the end of the month he visited the Count at Ebersdorf and celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Brethren. These hasty and seemingly willful acts on the part of Spangenberg simply intensified the estrangement already existing between the two parties and heightened the dislike for each other. The news of this entertainment and visitation soon reached Halle.

² Life of Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, Bishop of the Unity of the Brethren, from the German of Karl F. Ledderhose, London, 1855.

When he came back, February 6th, he was forbidden to preach.

Dismissal from Halle

The matter came to the attention of the faculty who took him to task for the zeal he displayed and the manner in which he acted in behalf of Zinzendorf, and for the manner in which he was carrying out, probably too literally, the teachings of Christ and of his Apostles. He was called before the conference-committees and given the alternative of doing penance before God, of submitting to his superiors, and of separating himself from Zinzendorf, or of leaving the matter to the decision of the king, unless he preferred to leave Halle "quietly."³ He was also told confidently that all past grievances would be forgotten if he would renounce all connections with the Count and with Herrnhut. He openly declared he would never do that; to do so would be to deny his Lord. It would seem there was nothing personal in the faculty's opposition to Spangenberg; they were simply opposed to the company he was keeping; they also wished to have it understood that he could not serve the Pietists at Halle and the Moravians at Herrnhut at one and the same time—that he could not serve two masters more than any one else. And Spangenberg, as though he had not been indiscreet enough, committed another rash act when on the day after Christmas he and a few other like-minded spirits met at the house of a Separatist for a social meal, but they termed it a love-feast. Here he expressed his views strongly concerning the rite of confession and the Lord's Supper as observed in the Lutheran Church. Spangenberg might have known, if he did not, that there was not much love lost between the Pietists and the Separatists.

The case came before the king, and Spangenberg was officially dismissed on April 2, 1733, and was told to leave Halle before Easter Sunday; and so on April 8, 1733, he was conducted to the gates of Halle by the military. Although he hailed the decree which ousted him from Halle with joy, saying it was a

pleasure to suffer for conscience' sake, it may be that after all he regretted the incident for he owned up later that he was himself to blame, because he wished to pursue the same course at Halle which characterized his conduct at Jena in relation to those who had gloried in the cross of Christ. He returned to Jena, where the students and his old friends met him with great acclaim, and when he left for Herrnhut they escorted him out of the city.

In Herrnhut

In Herrnhut, he united with the Church of the Brethren in 1733 and soon rose to distinction. He had now found, it would seem, his place and his life-work. Here he and Zinzendorf met once more; Zinzendorf made Spangenberg his assistant, so he dedicated himself at once wholly to the service of the Church of the Brethren, as he was now an inmate of his cherished abode. He was always filled with a missionary zeal; he had an ardent desire to become a missionary, even at the time he was a student at the University of Jena where Dr. Buddeus tried to dissuade him from such a course. But this desire he could not fulfill until after his uniting with the Church of the Brethren, who had just then taken up a new enterprise to send missionaries to the West Indies. For a starter on this new project, he departed with four married couples and ten Brethren, on foot, for Copenhagen to see them embark on this hazardous adventure. He felt depressed because his troubles at Halle had already reached Copenhagen; so he left for Herrnhut on November 5th, even before the little troop left on its dangerous journey. He served on many other missionary commissions and visitations.

In 1734, Spangenberg was commissioned to accompany the Schwenckfelders to Georgia; they had been living on the Count's manor in Berthelsdorf; by the spring of 1733 they were ordered by Royal Decree to migrate; but they were given a year's time to do so. Whither to migrate was a problem. Among several places considered were Pennsylvania and Georgia. They finally decided on Pennsylvania, while the Mo-

³ Encyclopedia Britannica.

ravians, who likewise felt constrained to locate elsewhere, migrated to Georgia. Zinzendorf had proposed that they migrate to Georgia in a body; but as the Schwenckfelders left for Pennsylvania, Spangenberg was delegated to conduct a band of Moravians to Savannah, Georgia, where they arrived on March 22, 1735. In February, 1736, twenty more arrived from Herrnhut; they had left there the previous August. Bishop Nitschman conducted them hither, and Governor Oglethorpe and John Wesley were fellow-passengers. The former, who was governor of Georgia, often came to visit Spangenberg and his colony. Wesley's acquaintance with Spangenberg began here; the friendship between the two and the Brethren lasted until 1740, when Wesley started the society known afterwards as the Methodists.

The Count, thwarted in his plans and efforts to corral the Schwenckfelders and win them over to his faith, and displeased, if not disgusted, with the way his plans were going awry, instructed Spangenberg to leave his work in Georgia and proceed to Pennsylvania and take charge of the work begun by Boenisch, who had been with the Schwenckfelders for two years and had lived with Christopher Wiegner on the latter's farm in Towamencin Township, Montgomery County. Boenisch left for Europe in 1737. Spangenberg left Georgia for Pennsylvania on March 15, 1736, with letters of introduction from Governor Oglethorpe to Thomas Penn. Bishop Nitschman, who had taken the second group of Moravians, was with him; he also made his headquarters at Wiegner's. In February, 1737, George Neisser came back from Georgia; he arrived at Wiegner's and made that place his abode. He had been dispatched by the Brethren in Georgia to report their distress to Spangenberg. So, for a while, there were four of them at Wiegner's and all imbued with the Moravian spirit. One might think it looked bad for the Schwenckfelders. It might be worthy of note to state that Bishop David Nitschman, who came back from Georgia with Spangenberg in 1736, spent his brief sojourn in Pennsylvania in ascertaining the religious condition of its

German population. With this purpose in mind, it is said, he travelled through rural districts and met with representatives of the different religious groups who were distracting the Christianity which had been transplanted into the wilds of this part of the new world.⁴ That is an unjust and uncalled-for accusation. These different religious groups, these sects, in the main brought their religion, their Christianity, with them; all they wanted was to be let alone; so that was why they came to this country. Presumably by their refusal to do obeisance to these would-be reformers, who thought they had a "corner" in religion, they caused the distraction, whereas these improvised reformers were themselves the distractors, for in the main they caused only dissatisfaction, dissension, and disunity.

Spangenberg came by sea from Charleston, South Carolina, to New York, where he left by land for Pennsylvania. As soon as he arrived he visited the Schwenckfelders in their new habitation. He travelled across New Jersey into Pennsylvania and discovered them settled in that portion of the Province now known as Montgomery County, and was hospitably received by one of them named Christopher Wiegner,⁵ whose large farm on the banks of the Skippack became the rendezvous of a half-dozen characters somewhat irresolute and lacking decidedly in good judgment. Their one and chief concern was to bring the Schwenckfelders over to the Moravian faith. Spangenberg was particularly anxious to lead Wiegner and his co-religionists into a clearer insight into the truth. Soon after his arrival he wrote: "I will visit the people, offer them my peace, place myself at their service, hear, ask and answer as it may please them, wishing that God Himself may open a door."⁶ This

⁴ William C. Reichel—*Memorials of the Moravian Church*, Philadelphia, 1870, p. 161.

⁵ James Henry—*Sketches of Moravian Life and Character*, Philadelphia, 1859, p. 105.

⁶ *Life of Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg*, Bishop of the Unity of the Brethren, from the German of Karl F. Ledderhose, London, 1855.

Christopher Wiegner, who was a bachelor, lived on this large farm with his mother and sister. Spangenberg tells how much Wiegner and his mother and the sister loved the Savior, and how he, to the best of his knowledge and ability, tried to help them grow in grace. In a letter of May 14, 1736, he says that the Schwenckfelders were widely scattered; that they took him up in great love; and that he expressed the hope that if the spirit of the age did not catch them again and if they did not become contaminated with erroneous teachings, many a one of them would become converted.⁷ But he had hardly begun his work among the Schwenckfelders when he was ordered by Bishop Nitschman to proceed on a visitation to the mission on the island of St. Thomas (West Indies), for which place he left from New York on September 10, 1736. He remained until October 16th of the next year. He came back badly shattered in health due to the climate of the West Indies; he was seriously ill and was not expected to recover.

Spangenberg spared neither time nor effort to gain his objective, i.e., to bring about the "conversion of the Schwenckfelders." As an excuse for not wishing to be idle he did not hesitate to assist his host on his farm. He hob-nobbed with these people and tried to fraternize with them. George Neisser, who lived at the Wiegner place for a while, says: "Through condescendence towards the Schwenckfelders the whole company (Wiegner, Spangenberg, and the others at Wiegner's house) attended their services and in clothing and other matters adapted themselves to them." One of the Brethren tells these particulars regarding his outfit: "His garb was similar to that of the Schwenckfelders. He wore a grey coat of coarse linen woven by these people; it was without pockets and buttons and was fastened with loops.⁸ And all was done to ingratiate himself into the good graces of these people; in fact, they were all bent on

doing the same thing, and Spangenberg in his docile and subtle manner was the slyest, the most dissembling, and the most persistent of them all." The reader will please recall how Spangenberg tried to win for himself the good graces of the Schwenckfelders by attending their meetings, adopting their mode of dress, etc. It is interesting to compare this description of his outfit and his actions with the extract from the following letter. On May 15, 1746, Martin Gros of Germantown wrote to a pastor in Wurttemberg.⁹ In speaking of Spangenberg's conduct and actions, he has this to say among other things:

You may well believe that Spangenberg, with whom you spoke before his first journey hither, was still unconverted (as the members of his congregation say) was just now converted through his wife, if I am to inform you of an instance of his present performance. . . . In general he does not visit any of his erstwhile very dear and trusted friends, or at least only very hurriedly while passing by in order to cut off any opportunity of talking of his present and former conduct, how he at one time in his ill-devised dress parade on Wiegner's farm tried to fish for the humble yet upright and exemplar Schwenckfelders and drive them into Zinzendorf's net.

He is now on another dress parade, he rides on a fine horse with a costly saddle so that he now and then in his blue uniform looks more like an army officer than as an apostle of the Lord. By such means does he seek to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the rich with his comforting Gospel.¹⁰

That statement that "he went fishing for the humble and yet upright and exemplar Schwenckfelders and to drive them into Zinzendorf's net," sums up the whole and sole purpose of his campaign among the Schwenckfelders. One ventures to say, and that fearlessly and challengingly, that the whole affair smacks of sycophancy and deception; and that the sole purpose of Zinzendorf, and of Spangenberg, was to drive the Schwenckfelders into their fold, destroy them as a religious body, and thus blot out their identity. That they were so deeply concerned about saving the souls

⁷ Jeremias Risler—*Leben Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg's Barby*, 1794.

⁸ *Life of Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg*, etc., from the German of Karl F. Ledderhose, London, 1855.

⁹ A kingdom in southeastern Germany, lying between Baden and Bavaria; its capital is Stuttgart.

¹⁰ Johann Philip Fresenius—*Bewährte Nachrichten Herrnhutischen Sachen*, Leipzig, 1748, Vol. III, p. 799.

of these people may be believed by those who care to do so.

The distress which George Neisser reported to Spangenberg when he, Neisser, came to Wiegner's place in February, 1737, was caused by the trouble that was brewing between the English and the Spaniards. So Spangenberg was deputed by Bishop Nitschman to proceed to Georgia. He found great disturbances and straightened out matters. He advised his people to migrate farther north in case war should break out. The Spaniards were trying to oust the English colonists, who demanded the assistance of the Moravians, but they refused to take up arms in their defence.¹¹ So, the only thing to do was to break up their settlement and move on; and this they were compelled to do in 1739 when they left their property and fled to Pennsylvania. And so the colony on the banks of the Savannah was broken up. After he had spent four years of arduous and strenuous labor here, Spangenberg left for Philadelphia, where he arrived in September. In August, 1739, he sailed for Europe and likewise terminated his questionable activities with the Schwenckfelders.*

At the close of 1739, he found himself in Marienborn in Hesse where he married the widow Immig, an Eldress in her Choir. The scene of his activity was now chiefly in England where he was engaged in spreading the name and doctrine of Herrnhut among the English people during the absence of Zinzendorf in America, 1741-42; and he did so successfully; many joined the new cause he was promulgating. He also had an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury. While in England, 1742, he founded the first English Moravian settlement in Yorkshire. Occasionally he went to Marienborn to look after the interests of the congregation there; and all the while he kept up an intensive correspondence with Zinzendorf, which continued until the latter's return from America, 1743.

¹¹ William C. Reichel—Memorials of the Moravian Church, Philadelphia, 1870, p. 203.

* *Vide*, first article in this issue for a fuller account of his maneuvers among the Schwenckfelders.

Back in America as a Bishop

As he was consecrated bishop in 1744, it was thought expedient that Spangenberg revisit America. So he and his wife set sail on a precarious voyage because the sea was infested with Spanish vessels. Once more in this country, he turned his attention to the Indians and henceforth repaired to Shekomeko with his wife. Then they went to Bethlehem where they remained five years. Here he arranged and superintended the Economy of the Brethren and also at Nazareth and at Gnadenthal. In addition, he established about thirty schools and devoted some attention to the Indians.

Leaves Again for Europe

In 1749, he and his wife left for Europe where he spent the year 1750 alternately in England and Germany. In 1751 his wife died, just shortly before his intended departure for Greenland. Coming from Copenhagen, he was too late to embark and his mission to Greenland was frustrated. In the same year, he was again in America; immediately after his arrival he set out for Bethlehem. The Brethren had been offered a tract of 100,000 acres in South Carolina by Lord Granville. So Spangenberg and five assistants set out on August 25, 1752, to locate the tract.¹² The privations they suffered and the dangers to which they were exposed in the forests, mountains and morasses would form a harassing story. He was in Bethlehem again by February 12, 1753. This was his fourth visit to America and lasted seven years. Soon after his arrival he married the widow Miksch. He continued making many trips hither and yon. When Zinzendorf died in 1760, Spangenberg was called to Europe to assume the place which Zinzendorf's passing had left vacant. His second wife died in 1789. He kept active but disease began its inroads; he died September 18, 1792, in Berthelsdorf, in his eighty-eighth year. He was four years younger than Zinzendorf, but outlived him for more than a quarter of a century. He was very probably one of the

¹² James Henry—Sketches of Moravian Life and Character, Philadelphia, 1859.

best representatives and exponents of Moravianism, and occupied a conspicuous position in the history of the Moravian Church in America.

An Indefatigable Worker

Spangenberg, like Zinzendorf, was an indefatigable worker. He was most industrious; he was never idle. The amount of work he did while in America was enormous; of course, he spent more time in this country than Zinzendorf did. Among his multifarious activities and duties, he interested himself in defending the Moravian colonies against the Indians in the war between France and England. In the heated wrangling over questions of doctrine which made the air of his day blue he became the apologist of his body against the attacks of the Lutherans and the Pietists. He also did good service in trying to moderate some of Zinzendorf's mystical extravagances, of which there were plenty. Spangenberg's practical and simple nature was wholly out of sympathy with many of them. If there is one phase of his work that stands out most prominently, it is his work connected with the Indian Missions, and the Moravians had many of them. Spangenberg's labor among them did much to keep the Indians quiet for many years, in spite of the massacres at Wyoming and Gnadenhütten, and the atrocities of the French and Indian War, all of which took place during Spangenberg's sojourn in this country. Many noted embassies were also intrusted to him. He had an interview with a deputation of chiefs of the Six Nations in Philadelphia, in July, 1749, when the compact made with Zinzendorf in 1742 was renewed; according to it, Moravian missionaries were allowed to reside in Onondago (New York) to perfect themselves in the Indian language.

Literary Efforts

Spangenberg left several writings, but none of them are of any particular importance or significance outside of Moravian circles. In 1777, he was commissioned to draw up an *Idea Fidei Fratrum*—a compendium of the Chris-

tian faith of the United Brethren; it became the accepted declaration of the Moravian faith. It is said that compared with Zinzendorf's writings, this book exhibits the finer balance and greater moderation of Spangenberg's nature.¹³

He wrote his autobiography and, among other writings, also *Leben des Herrn Nicholaus Ludwig Grafen von Zinzendorf*, etc., 8 volumes, 1773. He had free access to the Count's private papers and denominational archives. It is a most authoritative and copious repository of information; the whole work contains 2,257 pages. It is tedious reading, as is also the translation into English by Samuel Jackson, London, 1838. This work is about as much of a paraphrase as it is a translation. The Rev. P. Latrobe wrote the introduction. The same man also wrote an unsatisfactory abridgement of the eight-volume edition.

Spangenberg wrote several hymns, about ten in all, and most of them before 1746. They are said to be fervent and devout, but that they do not entitle him to rank high as a hymn-writer. Only a very few are worthy of note.

An Estimate

As intimated elsewhere, probably one should be somewhat charitably inclined toward Zinzendorf who presumably worked with the best intentions, but a psychic force or twist too often thwarted his better judgment and caused him to act and talk indiscreetly. He was very likely what he was because of his genius; it was natural with him. But with Spangenberg, it was a different matter. One does not readily know what his attitude was in regard to his work and interest elsewhere; but in his dealings with the Schwenckfelders one cannot help noticing a decided streak of *Scheingehiligkeit*: a spirit of sanctimoniousness, or hypocrisy; but even these terms do not translate the German adequately; one can invariably translate words, but the translating of the spirit is something else. An honest search of the records as they pertain to Spangenberg and the

¹³ Encyclopedia Britannica.

Schwenckfelders cannot lead by common sense and just, sane reasoning to any other conclusion but that Spangenberg harbored sinister motives in his dealings with these people, which motives he disguised by means of his subtle and docile manner and his fawning disposition while among them. What his demeanor may have been in his dealings elsewhere is of no moment here. He was evidently an honest and able man, much loved and respected. He did much in consolidating Moravian organizations. During the last thirty years of his activity he superintended, as bishop, the Moravian Churches in Pennsylvania.

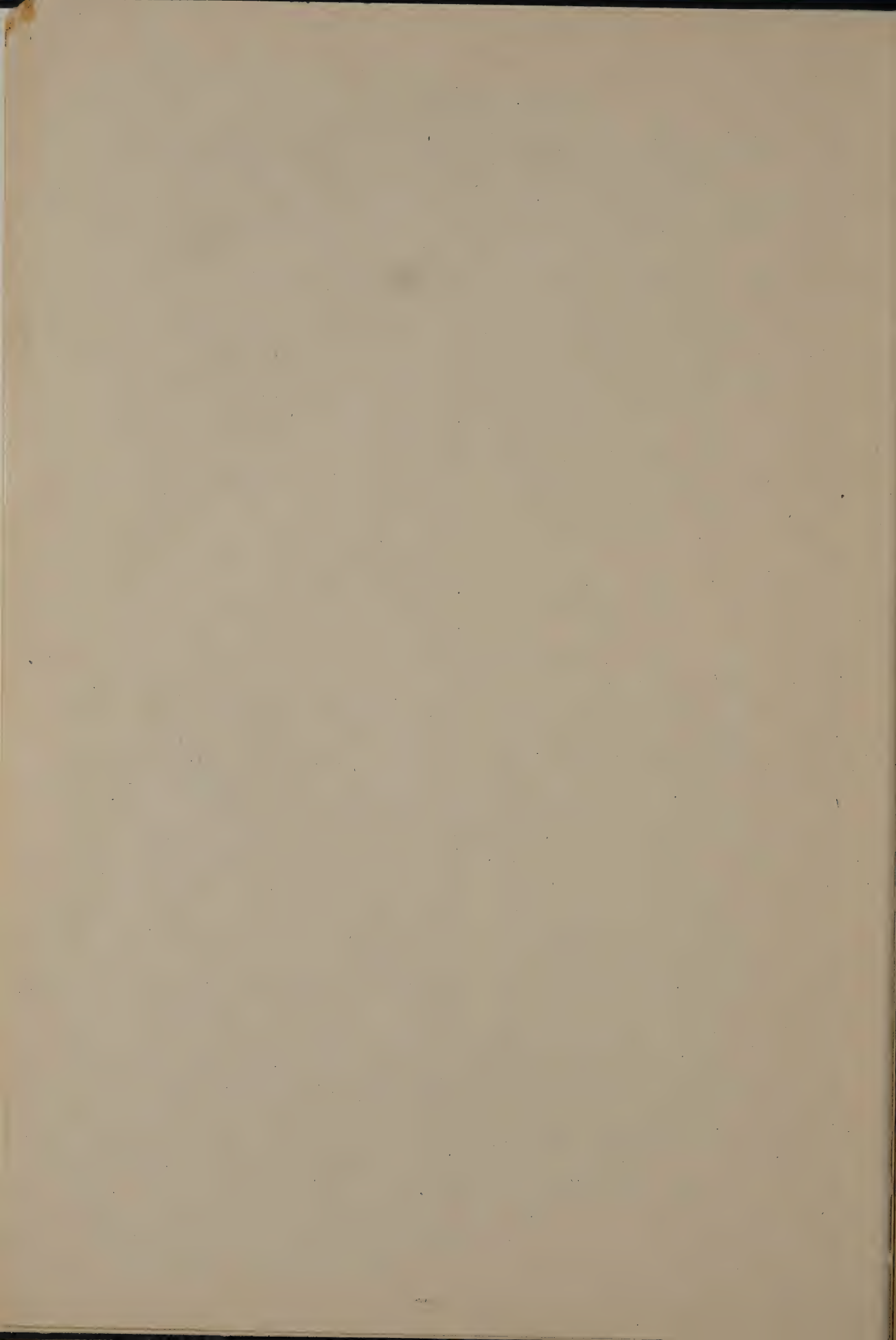
There are those who are convinced that the purpose of this whole campaign among the Schwenckfelders, as conducted by these would-be reformers for almost

a decade, was to win them over to the Moravian faith; and in order to accomplish their objective they virtually stopped at nothing. The saving of the souls of the Schwenckfelders about which they were so greatly concerned, at least they pretended to be, and over which they uttered such loud lamentations, was wholly a secondary matter. If they could have coerced these frugal, industrious, honest, dauntless but not Godless people to accept their faith, they would have acquired a great economic asset for their colony. That was their manifest intent—that and nothing else.

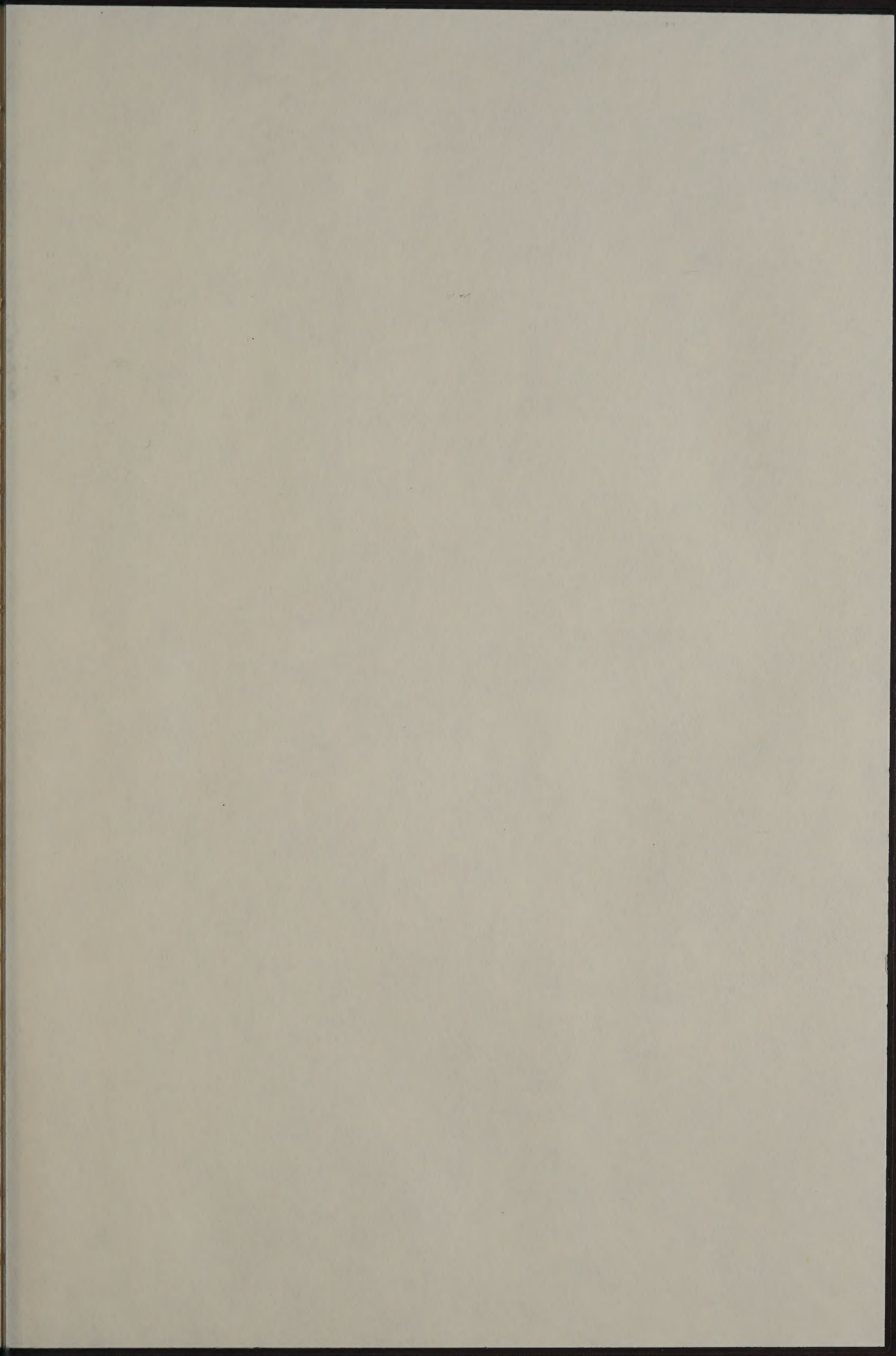
It is hoped that these "latest representatives of European persecution and commercialism" with their feudalistic ideas retreated as wiser men to the old country beyond the seas.

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